

Engraved by F. C. Lewis from a photograph by Mrs. W. H. Fox Talbot

*Elizabeth Barrett Browning*

THE POETICAL WORKS  
OF  
ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING

*IN SIX VOLUMES*



LONDON  
SMITH, ELDER, & CO., 15 WATERLOO PLACE  
1890



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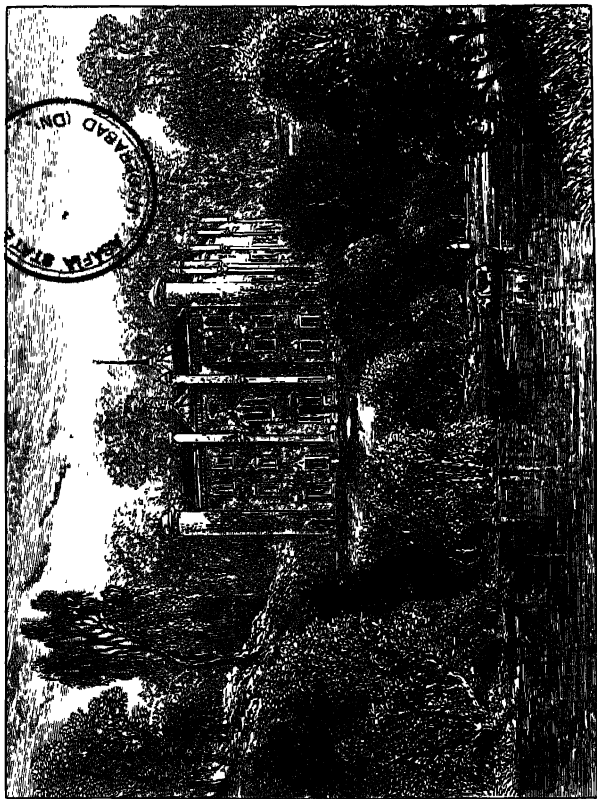
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HOPE END, HEREFORDSHIRE.

POEMS



## *CROWNED AND WEDDED.*

### I.

**W**HEN last before her people's face her own fair face  
she bent,  
**W**ithin the meek projection of that shade she was  
content  
to erase the child-smile from her lips, which seemed as  
if it might  
still kept holy from the world to childhood still in  
sight—  
erase it with a solèmn vow, a princely vow—to  
rule ;  
holyly vow—to rule by grace of God the pitiful ;  
every godlike vow—to rule in right and righteous-  
ness  
with the law and for the land—so God the vower  
bless !

## II.

The minster was alight that day, but not with fire, I  
    ween,  
And long-drawn glitterings swept adown that mighty  
    aisled scene ;  
The priests stood stoled in their pomp, the sworded chiefs  
    in theirs,  
And so, the collared knights, and so, the civil ministers,  
And so, the waiting lords and dames, and little pages best  
At holding trains, and legates so, from countries east and  
    west ;  
So, alien princes, native peers, and high-born ladie  
    bright,  
Along whose brows the Queen's, now crowned, flash  
    coronets to light ;  
And so, the people at the gates with priestly hands  
    high  
Which bring the first anointing to all legal majesty ;  
And so the DEAD, who lie in rows beneath the min  
    floor,  
There verily an awful state maintaining evermore :  
The statesman whose clean palm will kiss no  
    whate'er it be,  
The courtier who for no fair queen will rise up t  
    knee,

The court-dame who for no court-tire will leave her  
shroud behind,  
The laureate who no courtlier rhyme than "dust to dust"  
can find,  
The kings and queens who having made that vow and  
worn that crown,  
Descended unto lower thrones and darker, deep adown:  
*Dieu et mon droit*—what is't to them? what meaning can  
it have?—  
The King of kings, the right of death—God's judgment  
and the grave.  
And when betwixt the quick and dead the young fair  
queen had vowed,  
The living shouted "May she live! Victoria, live!"  
aloud:  
And as the loyal shouts went up, true spirits prayed  
between,  
"The blessings happy monarchs have be thine, O crownèd  
queen!"

## III.

But now before her people's face she bendeth hers  
anew,  
And calls them, while she vows, to be her witness there-  
unto.

She vowed to rule, and in that oath her childhood put  
away :

She doth maintain her womanhood, in vowing love to-  
day.

O lovely lady! let her vow! such lips become such  
vows,

And fairer goeth bridal wreath than crown with vernal  
brows.

O lovely lady! let her vow! yea, let her vow to love!

And though she be no less a queen, with purples hung  
above,

The pageant of a court behind, the royal kin around,  
And woven gold to catch her looks turned maidenly to  
ground,

Yet may the bride-veil hide from her a little of that  
state,

While loving hopes for retinues about her sweetness  
wait.

SHE vows to love who vowed to rule—(the chosen at her  
side)

Let none say, God preserve the queen! but rather, Bless  
the bride!

None blow the trump, none bend the knee, none violate  
the dream

Wherein no monarch but a wife she to herself may  
seem.

Or if ye say, Preserve the queen ! oh, breathe it inward  
low—

She is a *woman*, and *beloved* ! and 't is enough but so.  
Count it enough, thou noble prince who tak'st her by the  
hand

And claimest for thy lady-love our lady of the land !  
And since, Prince Albert, men have called thy spirit high  
and rare,

And true to truth and brave for truth as some at Augsburg  
were,

We charge thee by thy lofty thoughts and by thy poet-  
mind

Which not by glory and degree takes measure of man-  
kind,

Esteem that wedded hand less dear for sceptre than for  
ring,

And hold her uncrowned womanhood to be the royal  
thing.

#### IV.

And now, upon our queen's last vow what blessings shall  
we pray ?

None straitened to a shallow crown will suit our lips to-  
day :

Behold, they must be free as love, they must be broad as  
free,



Even to the borders of heaven's light and earth's  
humanity.

Long live she !—send up loyal shouts, and true hearts  
pray between,—

“The blessings happy PEASANTS have, be thine, O crownèd  
queen !”

## *CROWNED AND BURIED.*

### I.

NAPOLEON !—years ago, and that great word  
 Compact of human breath in hate and dread  
 And exultation, skied us overhead—  
 An atmosphere whose lightning was the sword  
 Scathing the cedars of the world,—drawn down  
 In burnings, by the metal of a crown.

### II.

Napoleon !—nations, while they cursed that name,  
 Shook at their own curse ; and while others bore  
 Its sound, as of a trumpet, on before,  
 Brass-fronted legions justified its fame ;  
 And dying men on trampled battle-sods  
 Near their last silence uttered it for God's.

## III.

Napoleon !—sages, with high foreheads drooped,  
Did use it for a problem ; children small  
Leapt up to greet it, as at manhood's call ;  
Priests blessed it from their altars overstooped  
By meek-eyed Christs ; and widows with a moan  
Spake it, when questioned why they sat alone.

## IV.

That name consumed the silence of the snows  
In Alpine keeping, holy and cloud hid ;  
The mimic eagles dared what Nature's did,  
And over-rushed her mountainous repose  
In search of eyries : and the Egyptian river  
Mingled the same word with its grand " For ever."

## V.

That name was shouted near the pyramidal  
Nilotic tombs, whose mummied habitants,  
Packed to humanity's significance,  
Motioned it back with stillness,—shouts as idle  
As hireling artists' work of myrrh and spice  
Which swathed last glories round the Ptolemies.

## VI.

The world's face changed to hear it ; kingly men  
Came down in chidden babes' bewilderment  
From autocratic places, each content  
With sprinkled ashes for anointing : then  
The people laughed or wondered for the nonce,  
To see one throne a composite of thrones.

## VII.

Napoleon !—even the torrid vastitude  
Of India felt in throbbings of the air  
That name which scattered by disastrous blare  
All Europe's bound-lines,—drawn afresh in blood.  
Napoleon !—from the Russias west to Spain :  
And Austria trembled till ye heard her chain.

## VIII.

And Germany was 'ware ; and Italy  
Oblivious of old fames—her laurel-locked,  
High-ghosted Cæsars passing uninvoked—  
Did crumble her own ruins with her knee,  
To serve a newer : ay ! but Frenchmen cast  
A future from them nobler than their past :

## IX.

For verily though France augustly rose  
With that raised NAME, and did assume by such  
The purple of the world, none gave so much  
As she in purchase—to speak plain, in loss—  
Whose hands, toward freedom stretched, dropped  
    paralysed  
To wield a sword or fit an undersized

## X.

King's crown to a great man's head. And though  
    along  
Her Paris' streets did float on frequent streams  
Of triumph, pictured or emmarbled dreams  
Dreamt right by genius in a world gone wrong,—  
No dream of all so won was fair to see  
As the lost vision of her liberty.

## XI.

Napoleon !—'t was a high name lifted high :  
It met at last God's thunder sent to clear  
Our compassing and covering atmosphere  
And open a clear sight beyond the sky  
Of supreme empire ; this of earth's was done—  
And kings crept out again to feel the sun.

## XII.

The kings crept out—the peoples sat at home,  
And finding the long-invoked peace  
(A pall embroidered with worn images  
Of rights divine) too scant to cover doom  
Such as they suffered, cursed the corn that grew  
Rankly, to bitter bread, on Waterloo.

## XIII.

A deep gloom centered in the deep repose ;  
The nations stood up mute to count their dead :  
And he who owned the NAME which vibrated  
Through silence,—trusting to his noblest foes  
When earth was all too grey for chivalry,  
Died of their mercies 'mid the desert sea.

## XIV.

O wild Saint Helen ! very still she kept him,  
With a green willow for all pyramid,  
Which stirred a little if the low wind did,  
A little more if pilgrims overwept him,  
Disparting the lithe boughs to see the clay  
Which seemed to cover his for judgment-day.

## XV.

Nay, not so long ! France kept her old affection  
As deeply as the sepulchre the corse ;  
Until, dilated by such love's remorse  
To a new angel of the resurrection,  
She cried " Behold, thou England ! I would have  
The dead, whereof thou wottest, from that grave."

## XVI.

And England answered in the courtesy  
Which, ancient foes turned lovers, may befit :  
" Take back thy dead ! and when thou buriest it,  
Throw in all former strifes 'twixt thee and me."  
Amen, mine England ! 't is a courteous claim :  
But ask a little room too—for thy shame !

## XVII.

Because it was not well, it was not well,  
Nor tuneful with thy lofty-chanted part  
Among the Oceanides,—that Heart  
To bind and bare and vex with vulture fell.  
I would, my noble England, men might seek  
All crimson stains upon thy breast—not cheek !

## XVIII.

I would that hostile fleets had scarréd Torbay,  
Instead of the lone ship which waited moored  
Until thy princely purpose was assured,  
Then left a shadow, not to pass away—\*  
Not for to-night's moon, nor to-morrow's sun :  
Green watching hills, ye witnessed what was done ! \*

## XIX.

But since it *was* done,—in sepulchral dust  
We fain would pay back something of our debt  
To France, if not to honour, and forget  
How through much fear we falsified the trust  
Of a fallen foe and exile. We return  
Orestes to Electra—in his urn.

## XX.

A little urn—a little dust inside,  
Which once outbalanced the large earth, albeit  
To-day a four-years child might carry it  
Sleek-browed and smiling, " Let the burden 'bide ! "  
Orestes to Electra !—O fair town  
Of Paris, how the wild tears will run down

\* Written at Torquay.



## XXI.

And run back in the chariot-marks of time,  
When all the people shall come forth to meet  
The passive victor, death-still in the street  
He rode through 'mid the shouting and bell-chime  
And martial music, under eagles which  
Dyed their rapacious beaks at Austerlitz !

## XXII.

Napoleon !—he hath come again, borne home  
Upon the popular ebbing heart,—a sea  
Which gathers its own wrecks perpetually,  
Majestically moaning. Give him room !  
Room for the dead in Paris ! welcome solemn  
And grave-deep, 'neath the cannon-moulded  
column !\*

## XXIII.

There, weapon spent and warrior spent may rest  
From roar of fields,—provided Jupiter  
Dare trust Saturnus to lie down so near  
His bolts !—and this he may : for, dispossessed  
Of any godship lies the godlike arm—  
The goat, Jove sucked, as likely to do harm.

\* It was the first intention to bury him under the column.

## XXIV.

And yet . . . Napoleon !—the recovered name  
Shakes the old casements of the world ; and we  
Look out upon the passing pageantry,  
Attesting that the Dead makes good his claim  
To a French grave,—another kingdom won,  
The last, of few spans—by Napoleon.

## XXV.

Blood fell like dew beneath his sunrise—sooth  
But glittered dew-like in the covenanted  
Meridian light. He was a despot—granted !  
But the *αἶρός* of his autocratic mouth  
Said yea i' the people's French ; he magnified  
The image of the freedom he denied :

## XXVI.

And if they asked for rights, he made reply  
“Ye have my glory !”—and so, drawing round them  
His ample purple, glorified and bound them  
In an embrace that seemed identity.  
He ruled them like a tyrant—true ! but none  
Were ruled like slaves : each felt Napoleon.

## XXVII.

I do not praise this man : the man was flawed  
For Adam—much more, Christ !—his knee unbent,  
His hand unclean, his aspiration pent  
Within a sword-sweep—pshaw !—but since he had  
The genius to be loved, why let him have  
The justice to be honoured in his grave.

## XXVIII.

I think this nation's tears thus poured together,  
Better than shouts. I think this funeral  
Grander than crownings, though a Pope bless all.  
I think this grave stronger than thrones. But whether  
The crowned Napoleon or the buried clay  
Be worthier, I discern not : angels may.

*TO FLUSH, MY DOG.*

I.

LOVING friend, the gift of one  
 Who her own true faith has run  
     Through thy lower nature,\*  
 Be my benediction said  
 With my hand upon thy head,  
     Gentle fellow-creature !

II.

Like a lady's ringlets brown,  
 Flow thy silken ears adown  
     Either side demurely  
     Of thy silver-suited breast  
 Shining out from all the rest  
     Of thy body purely.

\* This dog was the gift of my dear and admired friend, Miss Mitford, and belongs to the beautiful race she has rendered celebrated among English and American readers. The Flushes have their laurels as well as the Cæsars,—the chief difference (at least the very head and front of it) consisting, perhaps, in the bald head of the latter under the crown. (1844.)

## III.

Darkly brown thy body is,  
Till the sunshine striking this  
    Alchemize its dulness,  
When the sleek curls manifold  
Flash all over into gold  
    With a burnished fulness.

## IV.

Underneath my stroking hand,  
Startled eyes of hazel bland  
    Kindling, growing larger,  
Up thou leapest with a spring,  
Full of prank and curveting,  
    Leaping like a charger.

## V.

Leap! thy broad tail waves a lig.  
Leap! thy slender feet are bright,  
    Canopied in fringes;  
Leap! those tasselled ears of thine  
Flicker strangely, fair and fine  
    Down their golden inches.

## VI.

Yet, my pretty, sportive friend,  
Little is 't to such an end  
That I praise thy rareness ;  
Other dogs may be thy peers  
Haply in these drooping ears  
And this glossy fairness.

## VII.

But of *thee* it shall be said,  
This dog watched beside a bed  
Day and night unweary,  
Watched within a curtained room  
Where no sunbeam brake the gloom  
Round the sick and dreary.

## VIII.

Roses, gathered for a vase,  
In that chamber died apace,  
Beam and breeze resigning ;  
This dog only, waited on,  
Knowing that when light is gone  
Love remains for shining.

## IX.

Other dogs in thymy dew  
Tracked the hares and followed through  
Sunny moor or meadow ;  
This dog only, crept and crept  
Next a languid cheek that slept,  
Sharing in the shadow.

## X.

Other dogs of loyal cheer  
Bounded at the whistle clear,  
Up the woodside hieing ;  
This dog only, watched in reach  
Of a faintly uttered speech  
Or a louder sighing.

## XI.

And if one or two quick tears  
Dropped upon his glossy ears  
Or a sigh came double,  
Up he sprang in eager haste,  
Fawning, fondling, breathing fast,  
In a tender trouble.

## XII.

And this dog was satisfied  
If a pale thin hand would glide  
Down his dewlaps sloping,—  
Which he pushed his nose within,  
After,—platforming his chin  
On the palm left open.

## XIII.

This dog, if a friendly voice  
Call him now to blither choice  
Than such chamber-keeping,  
“Come out!” praying from the door,—  
Presseth backward as before,  
Up against me leaping.

## XIV.

Therefore to this dog will I,  
Tenderly not scornfully,  
Render praise and favour :  
With my hand upon his head,  
Is my benediction said  
Therefore and for ever.



## XV.

And because he loves me so,  
Better than his kind will do  
Often man or woman,  
Give I back more love again  
Than dogs often take of men,  
Leaning from my Human.

## XVI.

Blessings on thee, dog of mine,  
Pretty collars make thee fine,  
Sugared milk make fat thee !  
Pleasures wag on in thy tail,  
Hands of gentle motion fail  
Nevermore, to pat thee !

## XVII.

Downy pillow take thy head,  
Silken coverlid bestead,  
Sunshine help thy sleeping !  
No fly's buzzing wake thee up,  
No man break thy purple cup  
Set for drinking deep in.

## XVIII.

Whiskered cats aointed flee,  
Sturdy stoppers keep from thee  
Cologne distillations ;  
Nuts lie in thy path for stones,  
And thy feast-day macaroons  
Turn to daily rations !

## XIX.

Mock I thee, in wishing weal?—  
Tears are in my eyes to feel  
Thou art made so straitly,  
Blessing needs must straiten too,—  
Little canst thou joy or do,  
Thou who lovest *greatly*.

## XX.

Yet be blessèd to the height  
Of all good and all delight  
Pervious to thy nature ;  
Only *loved* beyond that line,  
With a love that answers thine,  
Loving fellow-creature !

*THE DESERTED GARDEN.*

I MIND me in the days departed,  
How often underneath the sun  
With childish bounds I used to run  
To a garden long deserted.

The beds and walks were vanished quite ;  
And wheresoe'er had struck the spade,  
The greenest grasses Nature laid  
To sanctify her right.

I called the place my wilderness,  
For no one entered there but I ;  
The sheep looked in, the grass to espy,  
And passed it ne'ertheless.

The trees were interwoven wild,  
And spread their boughs enough about  
To keep both sheep and shepherd out,  
But not a happy child.

Adventurous joy it was for me !  
I crept beneath the boughs, and found  
A circle smooth of mossy ground  
    Beneath a poplar tree.

Old garden rose-trees hedged it in,  
Bedropt with roses waxen-white  
Well satisfied with dew and light  
    And careless to be seen.

Long years ago it might befall,  
When all the garden flowers were trim,  
The grave old gardener prided him  
    On these the most of all.

Some lady, stately overmuch,  
Here moving with a silken noise,  
Has blushed beside them at the voice  
    That likened her to such.

And these, to make a diadem,  
She often may have plucked and twined,  
Half-smiling as it came to mind  
    That few would look at *them*.

Oh, little thought that lady proud,  
A child would watch her fair white rose,  
When buried lay her whiter brows,  
And silk was changed for shroud !

Nor thought that gardener, (full of scorns  
For men unlearned and simple phrase,)  
A child would bring it all its praise  
By creeping through the thorns !

To me upon my low moss seat,  
Though never a dream the roses sent  
Of science or love's compliment,  
I ween they smelt as sweet.

It did not move my grief to see  
The trace of human step departed :  
Because the garden was deserted,  
The blither place for me !

Friends, blame me not ! a narrow ken  
Has childhood 'twixt the sun and sward ;  
We draw the moral afterward,  
We feel the gladness then.

And gladdest hours for me did glide  
In silence at the rose-tree wall :  
A thrush made gladness musical  
Upon the other side.

Nor he nor I did e'er incline  
To peck or pluck the blossoms white ;  
How should I know but roses might  
Lead lives as glad as mine ?

To make my hermit-home complete,  
I brought clear water from the spring  
Praised in its own low murmuring,  
And cresses glossy wet.

And so, I thought, my likeness grew  
(Without the melancholy tale)  
To "gentle hermit of the dale,"  
And Angelina too.

For oft I read within my nook  
Such minstrel stories ; till the breeze  
Made sounds poetic in the trees,  
And then I shut the book.

If I shut this wherein I write  
I hear no more the wind athwart  
Those trees, nor feel that childish heart  
Delighting in delight.

My childhood from my life is parted,  
My footstep from the moss which drew  
Its fairy circle round : anew  
The garden is deserted.

Another thrush may there rehearse  
The madrigals which sweetest are ;  
No more for me ! myself afar  
Do sing a sadder verse.

Ah me, ah me ! when erst I lay  
In that child's-nest so greenly wrought,  
I laughed unto myself and thought  
"The time will pass away."

And still I laughed, and did not fear  
But that, whene'er was past away  
The childish time, some happier play  
My womanhood would cheer.

e time would pass away,  
          beside the rose-tree wall,  
          od, how seldom, if at all,  
Did I look up to pray !

The time is past ; and now that grows  
The cypress high among the trees,  
And I behold white sepulchres  
As well as the white rose,—

When graver, meeker thoughts are given,  
And I have learnt to lift my face,  
Reminded how earth's greenest place  
The colour draws from heaven,—

It something saith for earthly pain,  
But more for Heavenly promise free,  
That I who was, would shrink to be  
That happy child again.



*MY DOVES*

O Weisheit ! Du red'st wie eine Taube !—GOETHE.

My little doves have left a nest  
 Upon an Indian tree  
 Whose leaves fantastic take their rest  
 Or motion from the sea ;  
 For, ever there the sea-winds go  
 With sunlit paces to and fro.

The tropic flowers looked up to it,  
 The tropic stars looked down,  
 And there my little doves did sit  
 With feathers softly brown,  
 And glittering eyes that showed their right  
 To general Nature's deep delight.

And God them taught, at every close  
Of murmuring waves beyond  
And green leaves round, to interpose  
Their choral voices fond,  
Interpreting that love must be  
The meaning of the earth and sea.

Fit ministers ! Of living loves  
Theirs hath the calmest fashion,  
Their living voice the likest moves  
To lifeless intonation,  
The lovely monotone of springs  
And winds and such insensate things.

My little doves were ta'en away  
From that glad nest of theirs  
Across an ocean rolling grey  
And tempest-clouded airs :  
My little doves, who lately knew  
The sky and wave by warmth and blue.

And now, within the city prison,  
In mist and chillness pent,  
With sudden upward look they listen  
For sounds of past content,

For lapse of water, swell of breeze,  
Or nut-fruit falling from the trees.

The stir without the glow of passion,  
The triumph of the mart,  
The gold and silver as they clash on  
Man's cold metallic heart,  
The roar of wheels, the cry for bread,—  
These only sounds are heard instead.

Yet still, as on my human hand  
Their fearless heads they lean,  
And almost seem to understand  
What human musings mean,  
(Their eyes with such a plaintive shine  
Are fastened upwardly to mine!)—

Soft falls their chant as on the nest  
Beneath the sunny zone ;  
For love that stirred it in their breast  
Has not aweary grown,  
And 'neath the city's shade can keep  
The well of music clear and deep.

And love, that keeps the music, fills  
With pastoral memories ;

All echoings from out the hills,  
All droppings from the skies,  
All flowings from the wave and wind,  
Remembered in their chant, I find.

So teach ye me the wisest part,  
My little doves ! to move  
Along the city-ways with heart  
Assured by holy love,  
And vocal with such songs as own  
A fountain to the world unknown.

'T was hard to sing by Babel's stream—  
More hard, in Babel's street :  
But if the soulless creatures deem  
Their music not unmeet  
For sunless walls—let *us* begin,  
Who wear immortal wings within !

To me, fair memories belong  
Of scenes that used to bless,  
For no regret, but present song  
And lasting thankfulness,  
And very soon to break away,  
Like types, in purer things than they.

I will have hopes that cannot fade,  
For flowers the valley yields ;  
I will have humble thoughts instead  
Of silent, dewy fields :  
My spirit and my God shall be  
My seaward hill, my boundless sea.

*HECTOR IN THE GARDEN.*

## I.

NINE years old ! The first of any  
Seem the happiest years that come :  
Yet when *I* was nine, I said  
No such word ! I thought instead  
That the Greeks had used as many  
In besieging Ilium.

## II.

Nine green years had scarcely brought me  
To my childhood's haunted spring ;  
I had life, like flowers and bees,  
In betwixt the country trees,  
And the sun the pleasure taught me  
Which he teacheth every thing.

## III.

If the rain fell, there was sorrow :  
Little head leant on the pane,  
Little finger drawing down it  
The long trailing drops upon it,  
And the "Rain, rain, come to-morrow,"  
Said for charm against the rain.

## IV.

Such a charm was right Canidian,  
Though you meet it with a jeer !  
If I said it long enough,  
Then the rain hummed dimly off,  
And the thrush with his pure Lydian  
Was left only to the ear ;

## V.

And the sun and I together  
Went a-rushing out of doors :  
We our tender spirits drew  
Over hill and dale in view,  
Glimmering hither, glimmering thither  
In the footsteps of the showers.

## VI.

Underneath the chestnuts dripping,  
Through the grasses wet and fair,  
Straight I sought my garden-ground  
With the laurel on the mound,  
And the pear-tree oversweeping  
A side-shadow of green air.

## VII.

In the garden lay supinely  
A huge giant wrought of spade !  
Arms and legs were stretched at length  
In a passive giant strength,—  
The fine meadow turf, cut finely,  
Round them laid and interlaid.

## VIII.

Call him Hector, son of Priam !  
Such his title and degree.  
With my rake I smoothed his brow,  
Both his cheeks I weeded through,  
But a rhymersuch as I am,  
Scarce can sing his dignity.



## IX.

Eyes of gentianellas azure,  
Staring, winking at the skies :  
Nose of gillyflowers and box ;  
Scented grasses put for locks,  
Which a little breeze at pleasure  
Set a-waving round his eyes :

## X.

Brazen helm of daffodillies,  
With a glitter toward the light ;  
Purple violets for the mouth,  
Breathing perfumes west and south ;  
And a sword of flashing lilies,  
Holden ready for the fight :

## XI.

And a breastplate made of daisies,  
Closely fitting, leaf on leaf ;  
Periwinkles interlaced  
Drawn for belt about the waist ;  
While the brown bees, humming praises,  
Shot their arrows round the chief.

XII.

And who knows (I sometimes wondered)  
 If the disembodied soul  
 Of old Hector, once of Troy,  
 Might not take a dreary joy  
 Here to enter—if it thundered,  
 Rolling up the thunder-roll?

XIII.

Rolling this way from Troy-ruin,  
 In this body rude and rife  
 Just to enter, and take rest  
 'Neath the daisies of the breast—  
 They, with tender roots, renewing  
 His heroic heart to life?

XIV.

Who could know? I sometimes started  
 At a motion or a sound!  
 Did his mouth speak—naming Troy  
 With an *ὄτοτοτοτοί*?  
 Did the pulse of the Strong-hearted  
 Make the daisies tremble round?

## XV.

It was hard to answer, often :  
But the birds sang in the tree,  
But the little birds sang bold  
In the pear-tree green and old,  
And my terror seemed to soften  
Through the courage of their glee.

## XVI.

Oh, the birds, the tree, the ruddy  
And white blossoms sleek with rain !  
Oh, my garden rich with pansies !  
Oh, my childhood's bright romances !  
All revive, like Hector's body,  
And I see them stir again.

## XVII.

And despite life's changes, chances,  
And despite the deathbell's toll,  
They press on me in full seeming :  
Help, some angel ! stay this dreaming !  
As the birds sang in the branches,  
Sing God's patience through my soul !

## XVIII.

That no dreamer, no neglecter  
Of the present's work unsped,  
I may wake up and be doing,  
Life's heroic ends pursuing,  
Though my past is dead as Hector,  
And though Hector is twice dead.

*SLEEPING AND WATCHING.*

## I.

SLEEP on, baby, on the floor,  
Tired of all the playing :  
Sleep with smile the sweeter for  
That, you dropped away in.  
On your curls' full roundness stand  
Golden lights serenely ;  
One cheek, pushed out by the hand,  
Folds the dimple inly :  
Little head and little foot  
Heavy laid for pleasure,  
Underneath the lids half shut  
Slants the shining azure.  
Open-soul in noonday sun,  
So you lie and slumber :  
Nothing evil having done,  
Nothing can encumber.

## II.

I, who cannot sleep as well,  
Shall I sigh to view you ?  
Or sigh further to foretell  
All that may undo you ?  
Nay, keep smiling, little child,  
Ere the sorrow neareth :  
I will smile too ! patience mild  
Pleasure's token weareth.  
Nay, keep sleeping before loss :  
I shall sleep though losing !  
As by cradle, so by cross,  
Sure is the reposing.

## III.

And God knows who sees us twain,  
Child at childish leisure,  
I am near as tired of pain  
As you seem of pleasure.  
Very soon too, by His grace  
Gently wrapt around me,  
Shall I show as calm a face,  
Shall I sleep as soundly.  
Differing in this, that you  
Clasp your playthings, sleeping,

While my hand shall drop the few  
    Given to my keeping :  
Differing in this, that I  
    Sleeping shall be colder,  
And in waking presently,  
    Brighter to beholder :  
Differing in this beside—  
    (Sleeper, have you heard me ?  
Do you move, and open wide  
    Eyes of wonder toward me ?)—  
That while you I thus recall  
    From your sleep, I solely,  
Me from mine an angel shall,  
    With reveillie holy.

## SOUNDS.

ἤκουσας ἢ οὐκ ἤκουσας ;

ÆSCHYLUS.

## I.

HEARKEN, hearken !

The rapid river carrieth  
Many noises underneath

The hoary ocean :

Teaching his solemnity  
Sounds of inland life and glee  
Learnt beside the waving tree  
When the winds in summer prank  
Toss the shades from bank to bank,  
And the quick rains, in emotion  
Which rather gladdens earth than grieves,  
Count and visibly rehearse  
The pulses of the universe  
Upon the summer leaves—  
Learnt among the lilies straight  
When they bow them to the weight



Of many bees whose hidden hum  
 Seemeth from themselves to come—  
 Learnt among the grasses green  
 Where the rustling mice are seen  
 By the gleaming, as they run,  
 Of their quick eyes in the sun ;  
 And lazy sheep are browsing through  
 With their noses trailed in dew ;  
 And the squirrel leaps adown  
 Holding fast the filbert brown ;  
 And the lark, with more of mirth  
 In his song than suits the earth,  
 Droppeth some in, soaring high,  
 To pour the rest out in the sky ;  
 While the woodland doves apart  
 In the copse's leafy heart,  
 Solitary, not ascetic,  
 Hidden and yet vocal, seem  
 Joining, in a lovely psalm,  
 Man's despondence, nature's calm,  
 Half mystical and half pathetic,  
 Like a singing in a dream.\*

\* " While floating up bright forms ideal,  
     Mistress or friend, around me stream ;  
     Half sense-supplied, and half unreal,  
     Like music mingling with a dream."—*John* .

All these sounds the river telleth,  
Softened to an undertone  
Which ever and anon he swelleth  
By a burden of his own,  
    In the ocean's ear :  
Ay, and ocean seems to hear  
With an inward gentle scorn,  
Smiling to his caverns worn.

## II.

Hearken, hearken !  
The child is shouting at his play  
Fast in the tramping funeral's way ;  
The widow moans as she turns aside  
To shun the face of the blushing bride  
While, shaking the tower of the ancient church,  
The marriage bells do swing ;  
And in the shadow of the porch  
An idiot sits with his lean hands full  
Of hedgerow flowers and a poet's skull,  
Laughing loud and gibbering

unconsciously, with my own " dream," and gave their form  
to the above distich. The ideas however being suffi-  
cient, I am satisfied with sending this note to the press after  
and with acknowledging another obligation to the valued  
from I already owe so many. (1844.)

Because it is so brown a thing,  
While he sticketh the gaudy poppies red'  
In and out the senseless head  
Where all sweet fancies grew instead :  
And you may hear at the self-same time  
Another poet who reads his rhyme,  
Low as a brook in summer air,  
Save when he droppeth his voice adown<sup>h</sup>  
To dream of the amaranthine crown  
His mortal brows shall wear :  
And a baby cries with a feeble sound  
'Neath the weary weight of the life new<sup>h</sup>  
And an old man groans,—with his testa  
Only half-signed,—for the life that 's spe<sup>h</sup>  
And lovers twain do softly say,  
As they sit on a grave, "For aye, for aye  
And foemen twain, while Earth their mot<sup>h</sup>  
Looks greenly upward, curse each other :  
A school-boy drones his task, with looks  
Cast over the page to the elm-tree looks  
A lonely student cries aloud  
*Eureka!* clasping at his shroud ;  
A beldame's age-cracked voice doth sing  
To a little infant slumbering ;  
A maid forgotten weeps alone,  
Muffling her sobs on the trysting-stone ;

A sick man wakes at his own mouth's wail,  
A gossip coughs in her thrice-told tale,  
A muttering gamester shakes the dice,  
A reaper foretells goodluck from the skies,  
A monarch vows as he lifts his hand to them ;  
A patriot, leaving his native land to them,  
Cries to the world against perjured state ;  
A priest disserts  
Upon linen skirts,  
A sinner screams for one hope more,  
A dancer's feet do palpitate  
A piper's music out on the floor ;  
And nigh to the awful Dead, the living  
Low speech and stealthy steps are giving,  
Because he cannot hear ;  
And *he* who on that narrow bier  
Has room enough, is closely wound  
In a silence piercing more than sound.

## III.

Hearken, hearken !  
God speaketh to thy soul,  
Using the sùpreme voice which doth confound  
All life with consciousness of Deity,  
All senses into one,—

As the seer-saint of Patmos, loving John  
    (For whom did backward roll  
The cloud-gate of the future) turned to *see*  
The Voice which spake. It speaketh now,  
Through the regular breath of the calm creation,  
Through the moan of the creature's desolation  
Striking, and in its stroke resembling  
The memory of a solemn vow  
Which pierceth the din of a festival  
To one in the midst,—and he letteth fall  
    The cup with a sudden trembling.

## IV.

Hearken, hearken !  
God speaketh in thy soul,  
Saying, "O thou that movest  
With feeble steps across this earth of Mine,  
To break beside the fount thy golden bowl  
    And spill its purple wine,—  
Look up to heaven and see how, like a scroll,  
My right hand hath thine immortality  
In an eternal grasping ! thou, that lovest  
The songful birds and grasses underfoot,  
And also what change mars and tombs pollute—  
*I* am the end of love ! give love to *Me* !

O thou that sinnest, grace doth more abound  
Than all thy sin ! sit still beneath My rood,  
And count the droppings of My victim-blood,  
And seek none other sound ! ”

V.

Hearken, hearken !  
Shall we hear the lapsing river  
And our brother's sighing ever,  
And not the voice of God ?



SONNETS





## *THE SOUL'S EXPRESSION.*

WITH stammering lips and insufficient sound  
I strive and struggle to deliver right  
That music of my nature, day and night  
With dream and thought and feeling interwound,  
And inly answering all the senses round  
With octaves of a mystic depth and height  
Which step out grandly to the infinite  
From the dark edges of the sensual ground.  
This song of soul I struggle to outbear  
Through portals of the sense, sublime and whole,  
And utter all myself into the air :  
But if I did it,—as the thunder-roll  
Breaks its own cloud, my flesh would perish there,  
Before that dread apocalypse of soul.

*THE SERAPH AND POET.*

THE seraph sings before the manifest  
God-One, and in the burning of the Seven,  
And with the full life of consummate Heaven  
Heaving beneath him like a mother's breast  
Warm with her first-born's slumber in that nest.  
The poet sings upon the earth grave-riven,  
Before the naughty world, soon self-forgiven  
For wronging him,—and in the darkness prest  
From his own soul by worldly weights. Even so,  
Sing, seraph with the glory ! heaven is high ;  
Sing, poet with the sorrow ! earth is low :  
The universe's inward voices cry  
“ Amen ” to either song of joy and woe :  
Sing, seraph,—poet,—sing on equally !

*BEREAVEMENT.*

WHEN some Beloveds, 'neath whose eyelids lay  
The sweet lights of my childhood, one by one  
Did leave me dark before the natural sun,  
And I astonied fell and could not pray,—  
A thought within me to myself did say,  
“Is God less God, that *thou* art left undone?  
Rise, worship, bless Him, in this sackcloth spun,  
As in that purple!”—But I answered Nay!  
What child his filial heart in words can loose  
If he behold his tender father raise  
The hand that chastens sorely? can he choose  
But sob in silence with an upward gaze?—  
And *my* great Father, thinking fit to bruise,  
Discerns in speechless tears both prayer and praise.

*CONSOLATION.*

ALL are not taken ; there are left behind  
Living Beloveds, tender looks to bring  
And make the daylight still a happy thing,  
And tender voices, to make soft the wind :  
But if it were not so—if I could find  
No love in all the world for comforting,  
Nor any path but hollowly did ring  
Where “dust to dust” the love from life disjoined,  
And if, before those sepulchres unmoving  
I stood alone, (as some forsaken lamb  
Goes bleating up the moors in weary dearth,)  
‘Crying “Where are ye, O my loved and loving?”—  
I know a Voice would sound, “Daughter, I AM.  
Can I suffice for HEAVEN and not for earth?”

## TO MARY RUSSELL MITFORD

IN HER GARDEN

WHAT time I lay these rhymes anear thy feet,  
Benignant friend, I will not proudly say  
As better poets use, "These *flowers* I lay,"  
Because I would not wrong thy roses sweet,  
Blaspheming so their name. And yet, repeat  
Thou, overleaning them this springtime day,  
With heart as open to love as theirs to May,  
—"Low-rooted verse may reach some heavenly heat,  
Even like my blossoms, if as nature-true  
Though not as precious." Thou art unperplex—  
Dear friend, in whose dear writings drops the dew  
And blow the natural airs,—thou, who art next  
To nature's self in cheering the world's view,—  
To preach a sermon on so known a text !

*ON A PORTRAIT OF WORDSWORTH BY  
B. R. HAYDON.*

WORDSWORTH upon Helvellyn ! Let the cloud  
Ebb audibly along the mountain-wind  
Then break against the rock, and show behind  
The lowland valleys floating up to crowd  
The sense with beauty. He with forehead bowed  
And humble-lidded eyes, as one inclined  
Before the sovran thought of his own mind,  
And very meek with inspirations proud,  
Takes here his rightful place as poet-priest  
By the high altar, singing prayer and prayer  
To the higher Heavens. A noble vision free  
Our Haydon's hand has flung out from the mist :  
No portrait this, with Academic air !  
This is the poet and his poetry.

*PAST AND FUTURE.*

My future will not copy fair my past  
On any leaf but Heaven's. Be fully done,  
Supernal Will ! I would not fain be one  
Who, satisfying thirst and breaking fast,  
Upon the fulness of the heart at last  
Says no grace after meat. My wine has run  
Indeed out of my cup, and there is none  
To gather up the bread of my repast  
Scattered and trampled ; yet I find some good  
In earth's green herbs, and streams that bubble up  
Clear from the darkling ground,—content until  
I sit with angels before better food :  
Dear Christ ! when Thy new vintage fills my cup,  
This hand shall shake no more, nor that wine spill.



*IRREPARABLENESS.*

I HAVE been in the meadows all the day  
And gathered there the nosegay that you see,  
Singing within myself as bird or bee  
When such do field-work on a morn of May.  
But, now I look upon my flowers, decay  
Has met them in my hands more fatally  
Because more warmly clasped,—and sobs are free  
To come instead of songs. What do you say,  
Sweet counsellors, dear friends? that I should go  
Back straightway to the fields and gather more?  
Another, sooth, may do it, but not I!  
My heart is very tired, my strength is low,  
My hands are full of blossoms plucked before,  
Held dead within them till myself shall die.

*TEARS.*

THANK God, bless God, all ye who suffer not  
More grief than ye can weep for. That is well—  
That is light.grieving ! lighter, none befell  
Since Adam forfeited the primal lot.  
Tears ! what are tears ? The babe weeps in its cot,  
The mother singing ; at her marriage-bell  
The bride weeps, and before the oracle  
Of high-faned hills the poet has forgot  
Such moisture on his cheeks. Thank God for grace,  
Ye who weep only ! If, as some have done,  
Ye grope tear-blinded in a desert place  
And touch but tombs,—look up ! those tears will run  
Soon in long rivers down the lifted face,  
And leave the vision clear for stars and sun.

*GRIEF.*

I TELL you, hopeless grief is passionless ;  
That only men incredulous of despair,  
Half-taught in anguish, through the midnight air  
Beat upward to God's throne in loud access  
Of shrieking and reproach. Full desertness,  
In souls as countries, lieth silent-bare  
Under the blanching, vertical eye-glare  
Of the absolute Heavens. Deep-hearted man, express  
Grief for thy Dead in silence like to death—  
Most like a monumental statue set  
In everlasting watch and moveless woe  
Till itself crumble to the dust beneath.  
Touch it ; the marble eyelids are not wet :  
If it could weep, it could arise and go.

*SUBSTITUTION.*

WHEN some belovèd voice that was to you  
Both sound and sweetness, faileth suddenly,  
And silence, against which you dare not cry,  
Aches round you like a strong disease and new—  
What hope? what help? what music will undo  
That silence to your sense? Not friendship's sigh,  
Not reason's subtle count; not melody  
Of viols, nor of pipes that Faunus blew;  
Not songs of poets, nor of nightingales  
Whose hearts leap upward through the cypress-trees  
To the clear moon; nor yet the spheric laws  
Self-chanted, nor the angels' sweet "All hails,"  
Met in the smile of God: nay, none of these.  
Speak THOU, availing Christ!—and fill this pause.

*COMFORT.*

SPEAK low to me, my Saviour, low and sweet  
From out the hallelujahs, sweet and low,  
Lest I should fear and fall, and miss Thee so  
Who art not missed by any that entreat.  
Speak to me as to Mary at Thy feet !  
And if no precious gums my hands bestow,  
Let my tears drop like amber while I go  
In reach of Thy divinest voice complete  
In humanest affection—thus, in sooth,  
To lose the sense of losing. As a child,  
Whose song-bird seeks the wood for evermore,  
Is sung to in its stead by mother's mouth  
Till, sinking on her breast, love-reconciled,  
He sleeps the faster that he wept before.

*PERPLEXED MUSIC.*

AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED TO E. J.

EXPERIENCE, like a pale musician, holds  
A dulcimer of patience in his hand,  
Whence harmonies, we cannot understand,  
Of God's will in His worlds, the strain unfolds  
In sad, perplexèd minors : deathly colds  
Fall on us while we hear, and countermand  
Our sanguine heart back from the fancy-land  
With nightingales in visionary wolds.  
We murmur "Where is any certain tune  
Or measured music in such notes as these ?"  
But angels, leaning from the golden seat,  
Are not so minded ; their fine ear hath won  
The issue of completed cadences,  
And, smiling down the stars, they whisper—SWEET.

*WORK.*

WHAT are we set on earth for? Say, to toil ;  
Nor seek to leave thy tending of the vines  
For all the heat o' the day, till it declines,  
And Death's mild curfew shall from work assoil.  
God did anoint thee with His odorous oil,  
To wrestle, not to reign ; and He assigns  
All thy tears over, like pure crystallines,  
For younger fellow-workers of the soil  
To wear for amulets. So others shall  
Take patience, labour, to their heart and hand,  
From thy hand and thy heart and thy brave cheer,  
And God's grace fructify through thee to all.  
The least flower, with a brimming cup may stand,  
And share its dew-drop with another near.

*FUTURITY.*

AND, O belovèd voices, upon which  
Ours passionately call because erelong  
Ye brake off in the middle of that song  
We sang together softly, to enrich  
The poor world with the sense of love, and witch  
The heart out of things evil,—I am strong,  
Knowing ye are not lost for aye among  
The hills, with last year's thrush. God keeps a nich  
In Heaven to hold our idols; and albeit  
He brake them to our faces and denied  
That our close kisses should impair their white,  
I know we shall behold them raised, complete,  
The dust swept from their beauty,—glorified  
New Memnons singing in the great God-light.



*THE TWO SAYINGS.*

Two sayings of the Holy Scriptures beat  
Like pulses in the Church's brow and breast ;  
And by them we find rest in our unrest  
And, heart-deep in salt tears, do yet entreat  
God's fellowship as if on heavenly seat.  
The first is JESUS WEPT,—whereon is prest  
Full many a sobbing face that drops its best  
And sweetest waters on the record sweet :  
And one is where the Christ, denied and scorned,  
LOOKED UPON PETER. Oh, to render plain,  
By help of having loved a little and mourned,  
That look of sovran love and sovran pain  
Which HE, who could not sin yet suffered, turned  
On him who could reject but not sustain !

*THE LOOK.*

THE Saviour looked on Peter. Ay, no word,  
No gesture of reproach ; the Heavens serene  
Though heavy with armed justice, did not lean  
Their thunders that way : the forsaken Lord  
*Looked* only, on the traitor. None record  
What that look was, none guess ; for those who  
have seen

Wronged lovers loving through a death-pang keen,  
Or pale-cheeked martyrs smiling to a sword,  
Have missed Jehovah at the judgment-call.  
And Peter, from the height of blasphemy—  
“ I never knew this man ”—did quail and fall  
As knowing straight THAT GOD ; and turned free  
And went out speechless from the face of all,  
And filled the silence, weeping bitterly.

*THE MEANING OF THE LOOK.*

I THINK that look of Christ might seem to say—  
“Thou Peter ! art thou then a common stone  
Which I at last must break my heart upon,  
For all God’s charge to His high angels may  
Guard my foot better ? Did I yesterday  
Wash *thy* feet, my beloved, that they should run  
Quick to deny me ’neath the morning sun ?  
And do thy kisses, like the rest, betray ?  
The cock crows coldly.—Go, and manifest  
A late contrition, but no bootless fear !  
For when thy final need is dreariest,  
Thou shalt not be denied, as I am here ;  
My voice to God and angels shall attest,  
*Because I KNOW this man, let him be clear.*”

*A THOUGHT FOR A LONELY DEATH-BED.*

INSCRIBED TO MY FRIEND E. C.

IF God compel thee to this destiny,  
To die alone, with none beside thy bed  
To ruffle round with sobs thy last word said  
And mark with tears the pulses ebb from thee,—  
Pray then alone, “O Christ, come tenderly !  
By Thy forsaken Sonship in the red  
Drear wine-press,—by the wilderness outspread,—  
And the lone garden where Thine agony  
Fell bloody from Thy brow,—by all of those  
Permitted desolations, comfort mine !  
No earthly friend being near me, interpose  
No deathly angel ’twixt my face and Thine,  
But stoop Thyself to gather my life’s rose,  
And smile away my mortal to Divine !”

*WORK AND CONTEMPLATION.*

THE woman singeth at her spinning-wheel  
A pleasant chant, ballad or barcarole ;  
She thinketh of her song, upon the whole,  
Far more than of her flax ; and yet the reel  
Is full, and artfully her fingers feel  
With quick adjustment, provident control,  
The lines—too subtly twisted to unroll—  
Out to a perfect thread. I hence appeal  
To the dear Christian Church—that we may do  
Our Father's business in these temples mirk,  
Thus swift and steadfast, thus intent and strong ;  
While thus, apart from toil, our souls pursue  
Some high calm spheric tune, and prove our work  
The better for the sweetness of our song.

*PAIN IN PLEASURE.*

A THOUGHT lay like a flower upon mine heart,  
And drew around it other thoughts like bees  
For multitude and thirst of sweetnesses ;  
Whereat rejoicing, I desired the art  
Of the Greek whistler, who to wharf and mart  
Could lure those insect swarms from orange-trees,  
That I might hive with me such thoughts and please  
My soul so, always. Foolish counterpart  
Of a weak man's vain wishes ! While I spoke,  
The thought I called a flower grew nettle-rough,  
The thoughts, called bees, stung me to festering :  
Oh, entertain (cried Reason as she woke)  
Your best and gladdest thoughts but long enough,  
And they will all prove sad enough to sting !

*FLUSH OR FAUNUS*

You see this dog ; it was but yesterday  
I mused forgetful of his presence here,  
Till thought on thought drew downward tear on tear :  
When from the pillow where wet-cheeked I lay,  
A head as hairy as Faunus thrust its way  
Right sudden against my face, two golden-clear  
Great eyes astonished mine, a drooping ear  
Did flap me on either cheek to dry the spray !  
I started first as some Arcadian  
Amazed by goatly god in twilight grove :  
But as the bearded vision closelier ran  
My tears off, I knew Flush, and rose above  
Surprise and sadness,—thanking the true PAN  
Who by low creatures leads to heights of love.

*FINITE AND INFINITE.*

THE wind sounds only in opposing straits,  
The sea, beside the shore ; man's spirit rends  
Its quiet only up against the ends  
Of wants and oppositions, loves and hates,  
Where, worked and worn by passionate debates,  
And losing by the loss it apprehends,  
The flesh rocks round and every breath it sends  
Is ravelled to a sigh. All tortured states  
Suppose a straitened place. Jehovah Lord,  
Make room for rest, around me ! out of sight  
Now float me of the vexing land abhorred,  
Till in deep calms of space my soul may right  
Her nature, shoot large sail on lengthening cord,  
And rush exultant on the Infinite.



*AN APPREHENSION.*

IF all the gentlest-hearted friends I know  
Concentred in one heart their gentleness,  
That still grew gentler till its pulse was less  
For life than pity,—I should yet be slow  
To bring my own heart nakedly below  
The palm of such a friend, that he should press  
Motive, condition, means, appliances,  
My false ideal joy and fickle woe,  
Out full to light and knowledge ; I should fear  
Some plait between the brows, some rougher chime  
In the free voice. O angels, let your flood  
Of bitter scorn dash on me ! do ye hear  
What *I* say who bear calmly all the time  
This everlasting face to face with GOD ?

*DISCONTENT.*

LIGHT human nature is too lightly tost  
And ruffled without cause, complaining on—  
Restless with rest, until, being overthrown,  
It learneth to lie quiet. Let a frost  
Or a small wasp have crept to the innermost  
Of our ripe peach, or let the wilful sun  
Shine westward of our window,—straight we run  
A furlong's sigh as if the world were lost.  
But what time through the heart and through the brain  
God hath transfixed us,—we, so moved before,  
Attain to a calm. Ay, shouldering weights of pain,  
We anchor in deep waters, safe from shore,  
And hear submissive o'er the stormy main  
God's chartered judgments walk for evermore.

*PATIENCE TAUGHT BY NATURE.*

“O DREARY life,” we cry, “O dreary life !”  
And still the generations of the birds  
Sing through our sighing, and the flocks and herds  
Serenely live while we are keeping strife  
With Heaven’s true purpose in us, as a knife  
Against which we may struggle ! Ocean girds  
Unslackened the dry land, savannah-swards  
Unweary sweep, hills watch unworn, and rife  
Meek leaves drop yearly from the forest-trees  
To show, above, the unwasted stars that pass  
In their old glory : O thou God of old,  
Grant me some smaller grace than comes to these !—  
But so much patience as a blade of grass  
Grows by, contented through the heat and cold.

*CHEERFULNESS TAUGHT BY REASON.*

I THINK we are too ready with complaint  
In this fair world of God's. Had we no hope  
Indeed beyond the zenith and the slope  
Of yon grey blank of sky, we might grow faint  
To muse upon eternity's constraint  
Round our aspirant souls ; but since the scope  
Must widen early, is it well to droop,  
For a few days consumed in loss and taint ?  
O pusillanimous Heart, be comforted  
And, like a cheerful traveller, take the road,  
Singing beside the hedge. What if the bread  
Be bitter in thine inn, and thou unshod  
To meet the flints ? At least it may be said  
"Because the way is *short*, I thank thee, God."

*EXAGGERATION.*

WE overstate the ills of life, and take  
Imagination (given us to bring down  
The choirs of singing angels overshadowed  
By God's clear glory) down our earth to rake  
The dismal snows instead, flake following flake,  
To cover all the corn; we walk upon  
The shadow of hills across a level thrown,  
And pant like climbers: near the alder brake  
We sigh so loud, the nightingale within  
Refuses to sing loud, as else she would.  
O brothers, let us leave the shame and sin  
Of taking vainly, in a plaintive mood,  
The holy name of GRIEF!—holy herein,  
That by the grief of ONE came all our good.

*ADEQUACY.*

Now, by the verdure on thy thousand hills,  
Belovèd England, doth the earth appear  
Quite good enough for men to overbear  
The will of God in, with rebellious wills !  
We cannot say the morning-sun fulfils  
Ingloriously its course, nor that the clear  
Strong stars without significance insphere  
Our habitation : we, meantime, our ills  
Heap up against this good and lift a cry  
Against this work-day world, this ill-spread feast,  
As if ourselves were better certainly  
Than what we come to. Maker and High Priest,  
I ask thee not my joys to multiply,—  
Only to make me worthier of the least.

*TO GEORGE SAND.*

## A DESIRE.

THOU large-brained woman and large-hearted man,  
Self-called George Sand ! whose soul, amid the lions  
Of thy tumultuous senses, moans defiance  
And answers roar for roar, as spirits can :  
I would some mild miraculous thunder ran  
Above the applauded circus, in appliance  
Of thine own nobler nature's strength and science,  
Drawing two pinions, white as wings of swan,  
From thy strong shoulders, to amaze the place  
With holier light ! that thou to woman's claim  
And man's, mightst join beside the angel's grace  
Of a pure genius sanctified from blame,  
Till child and maiden pressed to thine embrace  
To kiss upon thy lips a stainless fame.

*TO GEORGE SAND.*

## A RECOGNITION.

TRUE genius, but true woman ! dost deny  
The woman's nature with a manly scorn,  
And break away the gauds and armlets worn  
By weaker women in captivity ?  
Ah, vain denial ! that revolted cry  
Is sobbed in by a woman's voice forlorn,—  
Thy woman's hair, my sister, all unshorn  
Floats back dishevelled strength in agony,  
Disproving thy man's name : and while before  
The world thou burnest in a poet-fire,  
We see thy woman-heart beat evermore  
Through the large flame. Beat purer, heart, and higher  
Till God unsex thee on the heavenly shore  
Where unincarnate spirits purely aspire !



*THE PRISONER.*

I COUNT the dismal time by months and years  
Since last I felt the green sward under foot,  
And the great breath of all things summer-mute  
Met mine upon my lips. Now earth appears  
As strange to me as dreams of distant spheres  
Or thoughts of Heaven we weep at. Nature's lute  
Sounds on, behind this door so closely shut,  
A strange wild music to the prisoner's ears,  
Dilated by the distance, till the brain  
Grows dim with fancies which it feels too fine :  
While ever, with a visionary pain,  
Past the precluded senses, sweep and shine  
Streams, forests, glades, and many a golden train  
Of sunlit hills transfigured to Divine.

*'INSUFFICIENCY.*

WHEN I attain to utter forth in verse  
Some inward thought, my soul throbs audibly  
Along my pulses, yearning to be free  
And something farther, fuller, higher, rehearse,  
To the individual, true, and the universe,  
In consummation of right harmony:  
But, like a wind-exposed distorted tree,  
We are blown against for ever by the curse  
Which breathes through Nature. Oh, the world is weak!  
The effluence of each is false to all,  
And what we best conceive we fail to speak.  
Wait, soul, until thine ashen garments fall,  
And then resume thy broken strains, and seek  
Fit peroration without let or thrall.

*TWO SKETCHES.*

H. B.

I.

THE shadow of her face upon the wall  
May take your memory to the perfect Greek,  
But when you front her, you would call the cheek  
Too full, sir, for your models, if withal  
That bloom it wears could leave you critical,  
And that smile reaching toward the rosy streak ;  
For one who smiles so has no need to speak  
To lead your thoughts along, as steed to stall.  
A smile that turns the sunny side o' the heart  
On all the world, as if herself did win  
By what she lavished on an open mart !  
Let no man call the liberal sweetness, sin,—  
For friends may whisper as they stand apart,  
“Methinks there's still some warmer place within.”

A. B.

II.

HER azure eyes, dark lashes hold in fee ,  
Her fair superfluous ringlets without check  
Drop after one another down her neck,  
As many to each cheek as you might see  
Green leaves to a wild rose ; this sign outwardly,  
And a like woman-covering seems to deck  
Her inner nature, for she will not fleck  
World's sunshine with a finger. Sympathy  
Must call her in Love's name ! and then, I know,  
She rises up, and brightens as she should,  
And lights her smile for comfort, and is slow  
In nothing of high-hearted fortitude.  
To smell this flower, come near it ! such can grow  
In that sole garden where Christ's brow dropped blood.

*MOUNTAINEER AND POET.*

THE simple goatherd between Alp and sky,  
Seeing his shadow, in that awful tryst,  
Dilated to a giant's on the mist,  
Esteems not his own stature larger by  
The apparent image, but more patiently  
Strikes his staff down beneath his clenching fist,  
While the snow-mountains lift their amethyst  
And sapphire crowns of splendour, far and nigh,  
Into the air around him. Learn from hence  
Meek morals, all ye poets that pursue  
Your way still onward up to eminence !  
Ye are not great because creation drew  
Large revelations round your earliest sense,  
Nor bright because God's glory shines for you.

*THE POET.*

THE poet hath the child's sight in his breast  
And sees all *new*. What oftenest he has viewed  
He views with the first glory. Fair and good  
Pall never on him, at the fairest, best,  
But stand before him holy and undressed  
In week-day false conventions, such as would  
Drag other men down from the altitude  
Of primal types, too early dispossessed.  
Why, God would tire of all his heavens, as soon  
As thou, O godlike, childlike poet, didst  
Of daily and nightly sights of sun and moon !  
And therefore hath He set thee in the midst  
Where men may hear thy wonder's ceaseless tune  
And praise His world for ever, as thou bidst.

*HIRAM POWERS' "GREEK SLAVE."*

THEY say Ideal beauty cannot enter  
The house of anguish. On the threshold stands  
An alien Image with enshackled hands,  
Called the Greek Slave ! as if the artist meant her  
(That passionless perfection which he lent her,  
Shadowed not darkened where the sill expands)  
To so confront man's crimes in different lands  
With man's ideal sense. Pierce to the centre,  
Art's fiery finger, and break up ere long  
The serfdom of this world. Appeal, fair stone,  
From God's pure heights of beauty against man's wrong !  
Catch up in thy divine face, not alone  
East griefs but west, and strike and shame the strong,  
By thunders of white silence, overthrown.

*LIFE.*

EACH creature holds an insular point in space ;  
Yet what man stirs a finger, breathes a sound,  
But all the multitudinous beings round  
In all the countless worlds with time and place  
For their conditions, down to the central base,  
Thrill, haply, in vibration and rebound,  
Life answering life across the vast profound,  
In full antiphony, by a common grace ?  
I think this sudden joyaunce which illumines  
A child's mouth sleeping, unaware may run  
From some soul newly loosened from earth's tombs :  
I think this passionate sigh, which half-begun  
I stifle back, may reach and stir the plumes  
Of God's calm angel standing in the sun.



*LOVE.*

WE cannot live, except thus mutually  
We alternate, aware or unaware,  
The reflex act of life : and when we bear  
Our virtue outward most impulsively,  
Most full of invocation, and to be  
Most instantly compellant, certes there  
We live most life, whoever breathes most air  
And counts his dying years by sun and sea.  
But when a soul, by choice and conscience, doth  
Throw out her full force on another soul,  
The conscience and the concentration both  
Make mere life, Love. } For Life in perfect whole  
And aim consummated, is Love in sooth,  
As Nature's magnet-heat rounds pole with pole.

*HEAVEN AND EARTH.*

“And there was silence in heaven for the space of half an hour.”

GOD, who with thunders and great voices kept  
Beneath Thy throne, and stars most silver-paced  
Along the inferior gyres, and open-faced  
Melodious angels round, canst intercept  
Music with music,—yet, at will, hast swept  
All back, all back (said he in Patmos placed,)  
To fill the heavens with silence of the waste  
Which lasted half an hour ! Lo, I who have wept  
All day and night, beseech Thee by my tears,  
And by that dread response of curse and groan  
Men alternate across these hemispheres,  
Vouchsafe us such a half-hour’s hush alone,  
In compensation for our stormy years :  
As heaven has paused from song, let earth from moan !

*THE PROSPECT.*

METHINKS we do as fretful children do,  
Leaning their faces on the window-pane  
To sigh the glass dim with their own breath's stain,  
And shut the sky and landscape from their view :  
And thus, alas, since God the maker drew  
A mystic separation 'twixt those twain,—  
The life beyond us, and our souls in pain,—  
We miss the prospect which we are called unto  
By grief we are fools to use. Be still and strong,  
O man, my brother ! Hold thy sobbing breath,  
And keep thy soul's large window pure from wrong !  
That so, as life's appointment issueth,  
Thy vision may be clear to watch along  
The sunset consummation<sup>+</sup>-lights of death.

*HUGH STUART BOYD.\**

## HIS BLINDNESS.

GOD would not let the spheric lights accost  
This God-loved man, and bade the earth stand off  
With all her beckoning hills whose golden stuff  
Under the feet of the royal sun is crossed.  
Yet such things were to him not wholly lost,—  
Permitted, with his wandering eyes light-proof,  
To catch fair visions rendered full enough  
By many a ministrant accomplished ghost,—  
Still seeing, to sounds of softly-turned book-leaves,  
Sappho's crown-rose, and Meleager's Spring,  
And Gregory's starlight on Greek-burnished eves :  
Till Sensuous and Unsensuous seemed one thing,  
Viewed from one level,—earth's reapers at the sheaves  
Scarce plainer than Heaven's angels on the wing.

\* To whom was inscribed, in grateful affection, my poem of "Cyprus Wine." There comes a moment in life when even gratitude and affection turn to pain, as they do now with me. This excellent and learned man, enthusiastic for the good and the beautiful, and one of the most simple and upright of human beings, passed out of his long darkness through death in the summer of 1848 ; Dr. Adam Clarke's daughter and biographer, Mrs. Smith (happier in this than the absent), fulfilling a doubly filial duty as she sat by the death-bed of her father's friend and hers.

*HUGH STUART BOYD.*

HIS DEATH, 1848.

BELOVED friend, who living many years  
With sightless eyes raised vainly to the sun,  
Didst learn to keep thy patient soul in tune  
To visible nature's elemental cheers !  
God has not caught thee to new hemispheres  
Because thou wast aweary of this one ;—  
I think thine angel's patience first was done,  
And that he spake out with celestial tears,  
“Is it enough, dear God? then lighten so  
This soul that smiles in darkness !”

Steadfast friend,  
Who never didst my heart or life misknow,  
Nor either's faults too keenly apprehend,—  
How can I wonder when I see thee go  
To join the Dead found faithful to the end?

*HUGH STUART BOYD.*

## LEGACIES,

THREE gifts the Dying left me,—Æschylus,  
And Gregory Nazianzen, and a clock  
Chiming the gradual hours out like a flock  
Of stars whose motion is melodious.  
The books were those I used to read from, thus  
Assisting my dear teacher's soul to unlock  
The darkness of his eyes ; now, mine they mock,  
Blinded in turn by tears ; now, murmurous  
Sad echoes of my young voice, years ago  
Intoning from these leaves the Grecian phrase,  
Return and choke my utterance. Books, lie down  
In silence on the shelf there, within gaze ;  
And thou, clock, striking the hour's pulses on,  
Chime in the day which ends these parting-days !



POEMS





# *THE LOST BOWER.*

## I.

IN the pleasant orchard-closes,  
“God bless all our gains,” say we ;  
But “May God bless all our losses”  
Better suits with our degree.

Listen, gentle—ay, and simple ! listen, children on  
the knee !

## II.

Green the land is where my daily  
Steps in jocund childhood played,  
Dimpled close with hill and valley,  
Dappled very close with shade :

Summer-snow of apple-blossoms running up from  
glade to glade.

## III.

There is one hill I see nearer  
In my vision of the rest ;  
And a little wood seems clearer  
As it climbeth from the west,  
Sideway from the tree-locked valley, to the airy  
upland crest.

## IV.

Small the wood is, green with hazels,  
And, completing the ascent,  
Where the wind blows and sun dazzles,  
Thrills in leafy tremblement,  
Like a heart that after climbing beateth quickly  
through content.

## V.

Not a step the wood advances  
O'er the open hill-top's bound ;  
There, in green arrest, the branches  
See their image on the ground :  
You may walk beneath them smiling, glad with  
sight and glad with sound.

## VI.

For you hearken on your right hand,  
How the birds do leap and call  
In the greenwood, out of sight and  
Out of reach and fear of all ;  
And the squirrels crack the filberts through their  
cheerful madrigal.

## VII.

On your left, the sheep are cropping  
The slant grass and daisies pale,  
And five apple-trees stand dropping  
Separate shadows toward the vale  
Over which, in choral silence, the hills look you  
their "All hail !"

## VIII.

Far out, kindled by each other,  
Shining hills on hills arise,  
Close as brother leans to brother  
When they press beneath the eyes  
Of some father praying blessings from the gifts of  
paradise.

## IX.

While beyond, above them mounted,  
And above their woods alsò,  
Malvern hills, for mountains counted  
Not unduly, loom a-row—  
Keepers of Piers Plowman's visions through the  
sunshine and the snow.\*

## X.

Yet, in childhood, little prized I  
That fair walk and far survey ;  
'T was a straight walk unadvised by  
The least mischief worth a nay ;  
Up and down—as dull as grammar on the eve of  
holiday.

## XI.

But the wood, all close and clenching  
Bough in bough and root in root,—  
No more sky (for overbranching)  
At your head than at your foot,—  
Oh, the wood drew me within it by a glamour past  
dispute !

\* The Malvern Hills of Worcestershire are the scene of Langland's Visions, and thus present the earliest classic ground of English poetry.

## XII.

Few and broken paths showed through it,  
Where the sheep had tried to run,—  
Forced with snowy wool to strew it  
Round the thickets, when anon  
They, with silly thorn-pricked noses, bleated back  
into the sun.

## XIII.

But my childish heart beat stronger  
Than those thickets dared to grow :  
*I* could pierce them ! *I* could longer  
Travel on, methought, than so :  
Sheep for sheep-paths ! braver children climb and  
creep where they would go.

## XIV.

And the poets wander, said I,  
Over places all as rude :  
Bold Rinaldo's lovely lady  
Sat to meet him in a wood :  
Rosalinda, like a fountain, laughed out pure with  
solitude.

## XV.

And if Chaucer had not travelled  
Through a forest by a well,  
He had never dreamt nor marvelled  
At those ladies fair and fell  
Who lived smiling without loving in their island-  
citadel.

## XVI.

Thus I thought of the old singers  
And took courage from their song,  
Till my little struggling fingers  
Tore asunder gyve and thong  
Of the brambles which entrapped me, and the  
barrier branches strong.

## XVII.

On a day, such pastime keeping,  
With a fawn's heart debonair,  
Under-crawling, overleaping  
Thorns that prick and boughs that bear,  
I stood suddenly astonished—I was gladdened un-  
aware.

## XVIII.

From the place I stood in, floated  
Back the covert dim and close,  
And the open ground was coated  
Carpet-smooth with grass and moss,  
And the blue-bell's purple presence signed it worthily  
across.

## XIX.

Here a linden-tree stood, bright'ning  
All adown its silver rind ;  
For as some trees draw the lightning,  
So this tree, unto my mind,  
Drew to earth the blessed sunshine from the sky  
where it was shrined.

## XX.

Tall the linden-tree, and near it  
An old hawthorn also grew ;  
And wood-ivy like a spirit  
Hovered dimly round the two,  
Shaping thence that bower of beauty which I sing  
of thus to you.



## XXI.

'T was a bower for garden fitter  
Than for any woodland wide :  
Though a fresh and dewy glitter  
Struck it through from side to side,  
Shaped and shaven was the freshness, as by garden-  
cunning plied.

## XXII.

Oh, a lady might have come there,  
Hooded fairly like her hawk,  
With a book or lute in summer,  
And a hope of sweeter talk,—  
Listening less to her own music than for footsteps  
on the walk !

## XXIII.

But that bower appeared a marvel  
In the wildness of the place ;  
With such seeming art and travail,  
Finely fixed and fitted was  
Leaf to leaf, the dark-green ivy, to the summit from  
the base.

## XXIV.

And the ivy veined and glossy  
Was enwrought with eglantine ;  
And the wild hop fibred closely,  
And the large-leaved columbine,  
Arch of door and window-mullion, did right sylvanly  
entwine.

## XXV.

Rose-trees either side the door were  
Growing lithe and growing tall,  
Each one set a summer warder  
For the keeping of the hall,—  
With a red rose and a white rose, leaning, nodding  
at the wall.

## XXVI.

As I entered, mosses hushing  
Stole all noises from my foot ;  
And a green elastic cushion,  
Clasped within the linden's root,  
Took me in a chair of silence very rare and absolute.

## XXVII.

All the floor was paved with glory,  
Greenly, silently inlaid  
(Through quick motions made before me)  
With fair counterparts in shade  
Of the fair serrated ivy-leaves which slanted over-  
head.

## XXVIII.

"Is such pavement in a palace?"  
So I questioned in my thought:  
'The sun, shining through the chalice  
Of the red rose hung without,  
Threw within a red libation, like an answer to my  
doubt.

## XXIX.

At the same time, on the linen  
Of my childish lap there fell  
Two white may-leaves, downward winning  
Through the ceiling's miracle,  
From a blossom, like an angel, out of sight yet  
blessing well.

## XXX.

Down to floor and up to ceiling  
Quick I turned my childish face,  
With an innocent appealing  
For the secret of the place  
To the trees, which surely knew it in partaking of the  
grace.

## XXXI.

Where's no foot of human creature  
How could reach a human hand?  
And if this be work of Nature,  
Why has Nature turned so bland,  
Breaking off from other wild-work? It was hard to  
understand.

## XXXII.

Was she weary of rough-doing,  
Of the bramble and the thorn?  
Did she pause in tender rueing  
Here of all her sylvan scorn?  
Or in mock of Art's deceiving was the sudden mild-  
ness worn?

## XXXIII.

Or could this same bower (I fancied)  
Be the work of Dryad strong,  
Who, surviving all that chanced  
In the world's old pagan wrong,  
Lay hid, feeding in the woodland on the last true  
poet's song?

## XXXIV.

Or was this the house of fairies,  
Left, because of the rough ways,  
Unsoiled by Ave Marys  
Which the passing pilgrim prays,  
And beyond St. Catherine's chiming on the blessed  
Sabbath days?

## XXXV.

So, young muser, I sat listening  
To my fancy's wildest word :  
On a sudden, through the glistening  
Leaves around, a little stirred,  
Came a sound, a sense of music which was rather  
felt than heard.

## XXXVI.

Softly, finely, it inwound me ;  
From the world it shut me in,—  
Like a fountain, falling round me,  
Which with silver waters thin  
Clips a little water Naiad sitting smilingly within.

## XXXVII.

Whence the music came, who knoweth ?  
I know nothing : but indeed  
Pan or Faunus never bloweth  
So much sweetness from a reed  
Which has sucked the milk of waters at the oldest  
river-head.

## XXXVIII.

Never lark the sun can waken  
With such sweetness ! when the lark,  
The high planets overtaking  
In the half-*evanished* Dark,  
Casts his singing to their singing, like an arrow to  
the mark.

## XXXIX.

Never nightingale so singeth :  
Oh, she leans on thorny tree  
And her poet-song she flingeth  
Over pain to victory !  
Yet she never sings such music,—or she sings it not  
to me.

## XL.

Never blackbirds, never thrushes  
Nor small finches sing as sweet,  
When the sun strikes through the bushes  
To their crimson clinging feet,  
And their pretty eyes look sideways to the summer  
heavens complete.

## XLI.

If it *were* a bird, it seemèd  
Most like Chaucer's, which, in sooth,  
He of green and azure dreamèd,  
While it sat in spirit-ruth  
On that bier of a crowned lady, singing nigh her  
silent mouth.

## XLII.

If it *were* a bird?—ah, sceptic,  
Give me “yea” or give me “nay”—  
Though my soul were nympholeptic  
As I heard that virèlay,  
You may stoop your pride to pardon, for my sin is  
far away!

## XLIII.

I rose up in exaltation  
And an inward trembling heat,  
And (it seemed) in geste of passion  
Dropped the music to my feet  
Like a garment rustling downwards—such a silence  
followed it!

## XLIV.

Heart and head beat through the quiet  
Full and heavily, though slower:  
In the song, I think, and by it,  
Mystic Presences of power  
Had up-snatched me to the Timeless, then returned  
me to the Hour.



## XLV.

In a child-abstraction lifted,  
Straightway from the bower I past,  
Foot and soul being dimly drifted  
Through the greenwood, till, at last,  
In the hill-top's open sunshine I all consciously was  
cast.

## XLVI.

Face to face with the true mountains  
I stood silently and still,  
Drawing strength from fancy's dauntings,  
From the air about the hill,  
And from Nature's open mercies and most debonair  
goodwill.

## XLVII.

Oh, the golden-hearted daisies  
Witnessed there, before my youth,  
To the truth of things, with praises  
Of the beauty of the truth ;  
And I woke to Nature's real, laughing joyfully for  
both.

## XLVIII.

And I said within me, laughing,  
I have found a bower to-day,  
A green lusus, fashioned half in  
Chance and half in Nature's play,  
And a little bird sings nigh it, I will nevermore  
missay.

## XLIX.

Henceforth, *I* will be the fairy  
Of this bower not built by one ;  
I will go there, sad or merry,  
With each morning's benison,  
And the bird shall be my harper in the dream-hall I  
have won.

## L.

So I said. But the next morning,  
(—Child, look up into my face—  
'Ware, oh sceptic, of your scorning !  
This is truth in its pure grace !)  
The next morning, all had vanished, or my wander-  
ing missed the place.

## LI.

Bring an oath most sylvan-holy,  
And upon it swear me true—  
By the wind-bells swinging slowly  
Their mute curfews in the dew,  
By the advent of the snowdrop, by the rosemary and  
rue,—

## LII.

I affirm by all or any,  
Let the cause be charm or chance,  
That my wandering searches many  
Missed the bower of my romance—  
That I nevermore upon it turned my mortal countenance.

## LIII.

I affirm that, since I lost it,  
Never bower has seemed so fair ;  
Never garden-creeper crossed it  
With so deft and brave an air,  
Never bird sung in the summer, as I saw and heard  
them there.

## LIV.

Day by day, with new desire,  
Toward my wood I ran in faith,  
Under leaf and over brier,  
Through the thickets, out of breath ;  
Like the prince who rescued Beauty from the sleep  
as long as death.

## LV.

But his sword of mettle clashèd,  
And his arm smote strong, I ween,  
And her dreaming spirit flashèd  
Through her body's fair white screen,  
And the light thereof might guide him up the cedar  
alleys green :

## LVI.

But for me, I saw no splendour—  
All my sword was my child-heart ;  
And the wood refused surrender  
Of that bower it held apart,  
Safe as Œdipus's grave-place 'mid Colonos' olives  
swart.

## LVII.

As Aladdin sought the basements  
His fair palace rose upon,  
And the four-and-twenty casements  
Which gave answers to the sun ;  
So, in 'wilderment of gazing, I looked up and I  
looked down.

## LVIII.

Years have vanished since, as wholly  
As the little bower did then ;  
And you call it tender folly  
That such thoughts should come again ?  
Ah, I cannot change this sighing for your smiling,  
brother men !

## LIX.

For this loss it did prefigure  
Other loss of better good,  
When my soul, in spirit-vigour  
And in ripened womanhood,  
Fell from visions of more beauty than an arbour in a  
wood.

## LX.

I have lost—oh, many a pleasure,  
Many a hope and many a power—  
Studious health and merry leisure,  
The first dew on the first flower !  
But the first of all my losses was the losing of the  
bower.

## LXI.

I have lost the dream of Doing,  
And the other dream of Done,  
The first spring in the pursuing,  
The first pride in the Begun,—  
First recoil from incompleteness, in the face of what is  
won—

## LXII.

Exaltations in the far light  
Where some cottage only is ;  
Mild dejections in the starlight,  
Which the sadder-hearted miss ;  
And the child-cheek blushing scarlet for the very  
shame of bliss.

## LXIII.

I have lost the sound child-sleeping  
Which the thunder could not break ;  
Something too of the strong leaping  
Of the staglike heart awake,  
Which the pale is low for keeping in the road it  
ought to take.

## LXIV.

Some respect to social fictions  
Has been also lost by me ;  
And some generous genuflexions,  
Which my spirit offered free  
To the pleasant old conventions of our false  
humanity.

## LXV.

All my losses did I tell you,  
Ye perchance would look away ;—  
Ye would answer me, " Farewell ! you  
Make sad company to-day,  
And your tears are falling faster than the bitter words  
you say."

## LXVI

For God placed me like a dial  
In the open ground with power,  
And my heart had for its trial  
All the sun and all the shower :  
And I suffered many losses,—and my first was of the  
bower.

## LXVII.

Laugh you? If that loss of mine be  
Of no heavy-seeming weight—  
When the cone falls from the pine-tree,  
The young children laugh thereat ;  
Yet the wind that struck it, riseth, and the tempest  
shall be great.

## LXVIII.

One who knew me in my childhood  
In the glamour and the game,  
Looking on me long and mild, would  
Never know me for the same.  
Come, unchanging recollections, where those changes  
overcame !



## LXIX.

By this couch I weakly lie on,  
While I count my memories,—  
Through the fingers which, still sighing,  
I press closely on mine eyes,—  
Clear as once beneath the sunshine, I behold the  
bower arise.

## LXX.

Springs the linden-tree as greenly,  
Stroked with light adown its rind ;  
And the ivy-leaves serenely  
Each in either intertwined ;  
And the rose-trees at the doorway, they have neither  
grown nor pined.

## LXXI.

From those overblown faint roses  
Not a leaf appeareth shed,  
And that little bud discloses  
Not a thorn's-breadth more of red,  
For the winters and the summers which have passed  
me overhead.

## LXXII.

And that music overfloweth,  
Sudden sweet, the sylvan eaves :  
Thrush or nightingale—who knoweth ?  
Fay or Faunus—who believes ?  
But my heart still trembles in me to the trembling  
of the leaves.

## LXXIII.

Is the bower lost, then ? who sayeth  
That the bower indeed is lost ?  
Hark ! my spirit in it prayeth  
Through the sunshine and the frost,—  
And the prayer preserves it greenly, to the last and  
uttermost.

## LXXIV.

Till another open for me  
In God's Eden-land unknown,  
With an angel at the doorway,  
White with gazing at His Throne ;  
And a saint's voice in the palm-trees, singing—"All  
is lost . . . and *won !*"

## *A SONG AGAINST SINGING.*

TO E. J. H.

### I.

THEY bid me sing to thee,  
 Thou golden-haired and silver-voicèd child—  
 With lips by no worse sigh than sleep's defiled—  
 With eyes unknowing how tears dim the sight,  
 And feet all trembling at the new delight  
     Treaders of earth to be !

### II.

Ah no ! the lark may bring  
 A song to thee from out the morning cloud,  
 The merry river from its lilies bowed,  
 The brisk rain from the trees, the lucky wind  
 That half doth make its music, half doth find,—  
     But *I*—I may not sing.

## III.

How could I think it right,  
New-comer on our earth as, Sweet, thou art,  
To bring a verse from out a human heart  
Made heavy with accumulated tears,  
And cross with such amount of weary years  
Thy day-sum of delight?

## IV.

Even if the verse were said,  
Thou—who wouldst clap thy tiny hands to hear  
The wind or rain, gay bird or river clear—  
Wouldst, at that sound of sad humanities,  
Upturn thy bright uncomprehending eyes  
And bid me play instead.

## V.

Therefore no song of mine,—  
But prayer in place of singing ; prayer that would  
Commend thee to the new-creating God  
Whose gift is childhood's heart without its stain  
Of weakness, ignorance, and changing vain—  
That gift of God be thine !

## VI.

So wilt thou aye be young,  
In lovelier childhood than thy shining brow  
And pretty winning accents make thee now :  
Yea, sweeter than this scarce articulate sound  
(How sweet !) of "father," "mother," shall be found  
The ABBA on thy tongue.

## VII.

And so, as years shall chase  
Each other's shadows, thou wilt less resemble  
Thy fellows of the earth who toil and tremble,  
Than him thou seest not, thine angel bold  
Yet meek, whose ever-lifted eyes behold  
The Ever-loving's face.

## *WINE OF CYPRUS.*

GIVEN TO ME BY H. S. BOYD, AUTHOR OF "SELECT PASSAGES  
FROM THE GREEK FATHERS," ETC.,

TO WHOM THESE STANZAS ARE ADDRESSED.

### I.

If old Bacchus were the speaker,  
     He would tell you with a sigh  
 Of the Cyprus in this beaker  
     I am sipping like a fly,—  
 Like a fly or gnat on Ida  
     At the hour of goblet-pledge,  
 By queen Juno brushed aside, a  
     Full white arm-sweep, from the edge.

### II.

Sooth, the drinking should be ampler  
     When the drink is so divine,  
 And some deep-mouthed Greek exemplar  
     Would become your Cyprus wine :

Cyclops' mouth might plunge aright in,  
While his one eye overleered,  
Nor too large were mouth of Titan  
Drinking rivers down his beard.

## III.

Pan might dip his head so deep in,  
That his ears alone pricked out,  
Fauns around him pressing, leaping,  
Each one pointing to his throat :  
While the Naiads, like Bacchantes,  
Wild, with urns thrown out to waste,  
Cry, "O earth, that thou wouldst grant us  
Springs to keep, of such a taste !"

## IV.

But for me, I am not worthy  
After gods and Greeks to drink,  
And my lips are pale and earthy  
To go bathing from this brink :  
Since you heard them speak the last time,  
They have faded from their blooms,  
And the laughter of my pastime  
Has learnt silence at the tombs.

## V.

Ah, my friend ! the antique drinkers  
Crowned the cup and crowned the brow.  
Can I answer the old thinkers  
In the forms they thought of, now ?  
Who will fetch from garden-closes  
Some new garlands while I speak,  
That the forehead, crowned with roses,  
May strike scarlet down the cheek ?

## VI.

Do not mock me ! with my mortal  
Suits no wreath again, indeed ;  
I am sad-voiced as the turtle  
Which Anacreon used to feed :  
Yet as that same bird demurely  
Wet her beak in cup of his,  
So, without a garland, surely  
I may touch the brim of this.

## VII.

Go,—let others praise the Chian !  
This is soft as Muses' string,  
This is tawny as Rhea's lion,  
This is rapid as his spring,



Bright as Paphia's eyes e'er met us,  
Light as ever trod her feet ;  
And the brown bees of Hymettus  
Make their honey not so sweet.

## VIII.

Very copious are my praises,  
Though I sip it like a fly !  
Ah—but, sipping,—times and places  
Change before me suddenly :  
As Ulysses' old libation  
Drew the ghosts from every part,  
So your Cyprus wine, dear Grecian,  
Stirs the Hades of my heart.

## IX.

And I think of those long mornings  
Which my thought goes far to seek,  
When, betwixt the folio's turnings,  
Solemn flowed the rhythmic Greek :  
Past the pane the mountain spreading,  
Swept the sheep's-bell's tinkling noise  
While a girlish voice was reading,  
Somewhat low for *ai* s and *oi* s.

## X.

Then, what golden hours were for us !

While we sat together there,  
How the white vests of the chorus  
Seemed to wave up a live air !  
How the cothurns trod majestic  
Down the deep iambic lines,  
And the rolling anapæstic  
Curled like vapour over shrines !

## XI.

Oh, our Æschylus, the thunderous,  
How he drove the bolted breath  
Through the cloud, to wedge it ponderous  
In the gnarlèd oak beneath !  
Oh, our Sophocles, the royal,  
Who was born to monarch's place,  
And who made the whole world loyal  
Less by kingly power than grace !

## XII.

Our Euripides, the human,  
With his droppings of warm tears,  
And his touches of things common  
Till they rose to touch the spheres !

Our Theocritus, our Bion,  
And our Pindar's shining goals !—  
These were cup-bearers undying  
Of the wine that 's meant for souls.

## XIII.

And my Plato, the divine one,  
If men know the gods aright  
By their motions as they shine on  
With a glorious trail of light !  
And your noble Christian bishops,  
Who mouthed grandly the last Greek  
Though the sponges on their hyssops  
Were distent with wine—too weak.

## XIV.

Yet, your Chrysostom, you praised him  
As a liberal mouth of gold ;  
And your Basil, you upraised him  
To the height of speakers old :  
And we both praised Heliodorus  
For his secret of pure lies,—  
Who forged first his linkèd stories  
In the heat of ladies' eyes.

## XV.

And we both praised your Synesius  
For the fire shot up his odes,  
Though the Church was scarce propitious  
As he whistled dogs and gods.  
And we both praised Nazianzen  
For the fervid heart and speech :  
Only I eschewed his glancing  
At the lyre hung out of reach.

## XVI.

Do you mind that deed of Atè  
Which you bound me to so fast,—  
Reading “De Virginitate,”  
From the first line to the last ?  
How I said at ending, solemn  
As I turned and looked at you,  
That Saint Simeon on the column ,  
Had had somewhat less to do ?

## XVII.

For we sometimes gently wrangled,  
Very gently, be it said,  
Since our thoughts were disentangled  
By no breaking of the thread !

And I charged you with extortions  
On the nobler fames of old—  
Ay, and sometimes thought your Porsons  
Stained the purple they would fold.

## XVIII.

For the rest—a mystic moaning  
Kept Cassandra at the gate,  
With wild eyes the vision shone in,  
And wide nostrils scenting fate.  
And Prometheus, bound in passion  
By brute Force to the blind stone,  
Showed us looks of invocation  
Turned to ocean and the sun.

## XIX.

And Medea we saw burning  
At her nature's planted stake :  
And proud Œdipus fate-scorning  
While the cloud came on to break—  
While the cloud came on slow, slower,  
Till he stood discrowned, resigned !—  
But the reader's voice dropped lower  
When the poet called him BLIND.

## XX.

Ah, my gossip ! you were older,  
And more learned, and a man !  
Yet that shadow, the enfolder  
Of your quiet eyelids, ran  
Both our spirits to one level ;  
And I turned from hill and lea  
And the summer-sun's green revel,  
To your eyes that could not see.

## XXI.

Now Christ bless you with the one light  
Which goes shining night and day !  
May the flowers which grow in sunlight  
Shed their fragrance in your way !  
Is it not right to remember  
All your kindness, friend of mine,  
When we two sat in the chamber,  
And the poets poured us wine ?

## XXII.

So, to come back to the drinking  
Of this Cyprus,—it is well,  
But those memories, to my thinking,  
Make a better oenomei ;

*WINE OF CYPRUS*

And whoever be the speaker,  
None can murmur with a sigh  
That, in drinking from *that* beaker,  
I am sipping like a fly.

## *A RHAPSODY OF LIFE'S PROGRESS.*

" Fill all the stops of life with tuneful breath."

*Poems on Man*, by CORNELIUS MATHEWS.\*

### I.

WE are borne into life—it is sweet, it is strange.  
 We lie still on the knee of a mild Mystery  
     Which smiles with a change ;  
 But we doubt not of changes, we know not of spaces,  
 The Heavens seem as near as our own mother's face is.  
 And we think we could touch all the stars that we see ;  
 And the milk of our mother is white on our mouth ;  
 And, with small childish hands, we are turning around  
 The apple of Life which another has found ;  
 It is warm with our touch, not with sun of the south,  
 And we count, as we turn it, the red side for four.  
     O Life, O Beyond,  
 Thou art sweet, thou art strange evermore !

\* A small volume, by an American poet—as remarkable in thought and manner for a vital sinewy vigour, as the right arm of " Pathfinder." (1844.)



## II.

Then all things look strange in the pure golden æther ;  
We walk through the gardens with hands linked together,  
    And the lilies look large as the trees ;  
And, as loud as the birds, sing the bloom-loving bees,  
And the birds sing like angels, so mystical-fine,  
And the cedars are brushing the archangels' feet,  
And time is eternity, love is divine,  
    And the world is complete.  
Now, God bless the child,—father, mother, respond !  
    O Life, O Beyond,  
    Thou art strange, thou art sweet.

## III.

Then we leap on the earth with the armour of youth,  
    And the earth rings again ;  
And we breathe out " O beauty ! " we cry out " O truth ! "  
And the bloom of our lips drops with wine,  
And our blood runs amazed 'neath the calm hyaline ;  
The earth cleaves to the foot, the sun burns to the  
    brain,—  
What is this exultation ? and what this despair ?—  
The strong pleasure is smiting the nerves into pain,  
And we drop from the Fair as we climb to the Fair,  
    And we lie in a trance at its feet ;

And the breath of an angel cold-piercing the air  
Breathes fresh on our faces in swoon,  
And we think him so near he is this side the sun,  
And we wake to a whisper self-murmured and fond,  
O Life, O Beyond,  
Thou art strange, thou art sweet !

## IV.

And the winds and the waters in pastoral measures  
Go winding around us, with roll upon roll,  
Till the soul lies within in a circle of pleasures  
Which hideth the soul :  
And we run with the stag, and we leap with the horse,  
And we swim with the fish through the broad water-  
course,  
And we strike with the falcon, and hunt with the hound,  
And the joy which is in us flies out by a wound.  
And we shout so aloud, " We exult, we rejoice,"  
That we lose the low moan of our brothers around :  
And we shout so adeep down creation's profound,  
We are deaf to God's voice.  
And we bind the rose-garland on forehead and ears  
Yet we are not ashamed,  
And the dew of the roses that runneth unblamed  
Down our cheeks, is not taken for tears.

Help us, God! trust us, man! love us, woman! "I hold  
Thy small head in my hands,—with its grapelets of gold  
Growing bright through my fingers,—like altar for oath,  
'Neath the vast golden spaces like witnessing faces  
That watch the eternity strong in the troth—

I love thee, I leave thee,  
Live for thee, die for thee!  
I prove thee, deceive thee,  
Undo evermore thee!

Help me, God! slay me, man!—one is mourning for  
both."

And we stand up though young near the funeral-sheet  
Which covers old Cæsar and old Pharamond,  
And death is so nigh us, life cools from its heat.

O Life, O Beyond,  
*Art* thou fair, *art* thou sweet?

v.

Then we act to a purpose, we spring up erect:  
We will tame the wild mouths of the wilderness-steeds,  
We will plough up the deep in the ships double-decked,  
We will build the great cities, and do the great deeds,  
Strike the steel upon steel, strike the soul upon soul,  
Strike the dole on the weal, overcoming the dole.  
Let the cloud meet the cloud in a grand thunder-roll!

"While the eagle of Thought rides the tempest in scorn,  
Who cares if the lightning is burning the corn?

Let us sit on the thrones

In a purple sublimity,

And grind down men's bones

To a pale unanimity.

Speed me, God! serve me, man! I am god over men;

When I speak in my cloud, none shall answer again;

'Neath the stripe and the bond,

'Lie and mourn at my feet!"

O Life, O Beyond,

Thou art strange, thou art sweet!

## VI.

Then we grow into thought, and with inward ascensions

Touch the bounds of our Being.

We lie in the dark here, swathed doubly around

With our sensual relations and social conventions,

Yet are 'ware of a sight, yet are 'ware of a sound

Beyond Hearing and Seeing,—

Are aware that a Hades rolls deep on all sides

With its infinite tides

About and above us,—until the strong arch

Of our life creaks and bends as if ready for falling,

And through the dim rolling we hear the sweet calling

Of spirits that speak in a soft under-tongue

The sense of the mystical march :

And we cry to them softly, "Come nearer, come nearer

And lift up the lap of this dark, and speak clearer,

And teach us the song that ye sung !"

And we smile in our thought as they answer or no,

For to dream of a sweetness is sweet as to know.

Wonders breathe in our face

And we ask not their name ;

Love takes all the blame

Of the world's prison-place ;

And we sing back the songs as we guess them, aloud,

And we send up the lark of our music that cuts

Untired through the cloud

To beat with its wings at the lattice Heaven shuts ;

Yet the angels look down and the mortals look up

As the little wings beat,

And the poet is blessed with their pity or hope.

'Twixt the heavens and the earth *can* a poet despond ?

O Life, O Beyond,

Thou art strange, thou art sweet !

## VII.

Then we wring from our souls their applicative strength,

And bend to the cord the strong bow of our ken,

And bringing our lives to the level of others,

Hold the cup we have filled, to their uses at length.

“Help me, God ! love me, man ! I am man among men,

And my life is a pledge

Of the ease of another's !”

From the fire and the water we drive out the steam

With a rush and a roar and the speed of a dream ;

And the car without horses, the car without wings,

Roars onward and flies

On its grey iron edge

'Neath the heat of a Thought sitting still in our eyes :

And our hand knots in air, with the bridge that it flings,

Two peaks far disrupted by ocean and skies,

And, lifting a fold of the smooth-flowing Thames,

Draws under the world with its turmoils and pothers,

While the swans float on softly, untouched in their calms

By humanity's hum at the root of the springs.

And with reachings of Thought we reach down to the

deeps

Of the souls of our brothers,

We teach them full words with our slow-moving lips,

“God,” “Liberty,” “Truth,”—which they hearken and  
think

And work into harmony, link upon link,

Till the silver meets round the earth gelid and dense,

Shedding sparks of electric responding intense

On the dark of eclipse.

Then we hear through the silence and glory afar,  
    As from shores of a star  
In aphelion, the new generations that cry  
Disenthralled by our voice to harmonious reply,  
    “God,” “Liberty,” “Truth !”  
We are glorious forsooth,  
    And our name has a seat,  
Though the shroud should be donned.  
    O Life, O Beyond,  
Thou art strange, thou art sweet !

## VIII.

Help me, God ! help me, man ! I am low, I am weak :  
Death loosens my sinews and creeps in my veins ;  
My body is cleft by these wedges of pains  
    From my spirit's serene,  
And I feel the externe and insensate creep in  
    On my organized clay ;  
I sob not, nor shriek,  
    Yet I faint fast away :  
I am strong in the spirit,—deep-thoughted, clear-eyed,—  
I could walk, step for step, with an angel beside,  
    On the heaven-heights of truth.  
    Oh, the soul keeps its youth  
But the body faints sore, it is tried in the race,

It sinks from the chariot ere reaching the goal,  
It is weak, it is cold,  
The rein drops from its hold,  
It sinks back, with the death in its face.  
On, chariot! on, soul!  
Ye are all the more fleet—  
Be alone at the goal  
Of the strange and the sweet!

## IX.

Love us, God! love us, man! we believe, we achieve:  
Let us love, let us live,  
For the acts correspond;  
We are glorious, and DIE:  
And again on the knee of a mild Mystery  
That smiles with a change,  
Here we lie.  
O DEATH, O BEYOND,  
Thou art sweet, thou art strange!



## *A LAY OF THE EARLY ROSE.*

. . . discordance that can accord.

*Romaunt of the Rose.*

A ROSE once grew within  
 A garden April-green,  
 In her louness, in her louness,  
 And the fairer for that oneness.

A white rose delicate  
 On a tall bough and straight :  
 Early comer, early comer,  
 Never waiting for the summer.

Her pretty gestes did win  
 South winds to let her in,  
 In her louness, in her louness,  
 All the fairer for that oneness.

“For if I wait,” said she,

“Till time for roses be,

For the moss-rose and the musk-rose,

Maiden-blush and royal-dusk rose,

“What glory then for me

In such a company?—

Roses plenty, roses plenty,

And one nightingale for twenty!

“Nay, let me in,” said she

“Before the rest are free,

In my lonesness, in my lonesness,

All the fairer for that oneness.

“For I would lonely stand

Uplifting my white hand,

On a mission, on a mission,

To declare the coming vision.

“Upon which lifted sign,

What worship will be mine!

What addressing, what caressing,

And what thanks and praise and blessing!

“A windlike joy will rush  
Through every tree and bush,  
Bending softly in affection  
And spontaneous benediction.

“Insects, that only may  
Live in a sunbright ray,  
To my whiteness, to my whiteness,  
Shall be drawn as to a brightness,—

“And every moth and bee  
Approach me reverently,  
Wheeling o’er me, wheeling o’er me,  
Coronals of motioned glory.

“Three larks shall leave a cloud,  
To my whiter beauty vowed,  
Singing gladly all the moontide,  
Never waiting for the suntide.

“Ten nightingales shall flee  
Their woods for love of me,  
Singing sadly all the suntide,  
Never waiting for the moontide.

“I ween the very skies  
Will look down with surprise,  
When below on earth they see me  
With my starry aspect dreamy.

“And earth will call her flowers  
To hasten out of doors,  
By their curtsies and sweet-smelling  
To give grace to my foretelling.”

So praying, did she win  
South winds to let her in,  
In her liveness, in her liveness,  
And the fairer for that oneness.

But ah,—alas for her!  
No thing did minister  
To her praises, to her praises,  
More than might unto a daisy’s.

No tree nor bush was seen  
To boast a perfect green,  
Scarcely having, scarcely having  
One leaf broad enough for waving.

The little flies did crawl  
Along the southern wall,  
Faintly shifting, faintly shifting  
Wings scarce long enough for lifting.

The lark, too high or low,  
I ween, did miss her so,  
With his nest down in the gorses,  
And his song in the star-courses.

The nightingale did please  
To loiter beyond seas :  
Guess him in the Happy Islands,  
Learning music from the silence !

Only the bee, forsooth,  
Came in the place of both,  
Doing honour, doing honour  
To the honey-dews upon her.

The skies looked coldly down  
As on a royal crown ;  
Then with drop for drop, at leisure,  
They began to rain for pleasure.

Whereat the earth did seem  
To waken from a dream,  
Winter-frozen, winter-frozen,  
Her unquiet eyes unclosing—

Said to the Rose, “Ha, snow !  
And art thou fallen so ?  
Thou, who wast enthronèd stately  
All along my mountains lately ?

“Holla, thou world-wide snow !  
And art thou wasted so,  
With a little bough to catch thee,  
And a little bee to watch thee ?”

—Poor Rose, to be misknown !  
Would she had ne’er been blown,  
In her liveness, in her liveness,  
All the sadder for that oneness !

Some word she tried to say,  
Some *no* . . . ah, wellaway !  
But the passion did o’ercome her,  
And the fair frail leaves dropped from her.

—Dropped from her fair and mute,  
Close to a poet's foot,  
Who beheld them, smiling slowly,  
As at something sad yet holy,—

Said "Verily and thus  
It chances too with *us*  
Poets, singing sweetest snatches  
While that deaf men keep the watches :

"Vaunting to come before  
Our own age evermore,  
In a liveness, in a liveness,  
And the nobler for that oneness.

"Holy in voice and heart,  
To high ends, set apart :  
All unmated, all unmated,  
Just because so consecrated.

"But if alone we be,  
Where is our empery?  
And if none can reach our stature,  
Who can mete our lofty nature?

“What bell will yield a tone,  
Swung in the air alone?  
If no brazen clapper bringing,  
Who can hear the chimèd ringing?

“What angel but would seem  
To sensual eyes, ghost-dim?  
And without assimilation,  
Vain is interpenetration.

“And thus, what can we do,  
Poor rose and poet too,  
Who both antedate our mission  
In an unprepared season?

“Drop, leaf! be silent, song!  
Cold things we come among:  
We must warm them, we must warm them,  
Ere we ever hope to charm them.

“Howbeit” (here his face  
Lightened around the place,  
So to mark the outward turning  
Of its spirit’s inward burning)



“Something it is, to hold  
In God’s worlds manifold,  
First revealed to creature-duty,  
Some new form of His mild Beauty.

“Whether that form respect  
The sense or intellect,  
Holy be, in mood or meadow,  
The Chief Beauty’s sign and shadow!

“Holy, in me and thee,  
Rose fallen from the tree,—  
Though the world stand dumb around us,  
All unable to expound us.

“Though none us deign to bless,  
Blessèd are we, natheless ;  
Blessèd still and consecrated  
In that, rose, we were created.

“Oh, shame to poet’s lays  
Sung for the dole of praise,—  
Hoarsely sung upon the highway  
With that *obolum da mihi!*

“Shame, shame to poet’s soul  
Pining for such a dole,  
When Heaven-chosen to inherit  
The high throne of a chief spirit!

“Sit still upon your thrones,  
O ye poetic ones!  
And if, sooth, the world decry you,  
Let it pass unchallenged by you.

“Ye to yourselves suffice,  
Without its flatteries.  
Self-contentedly approve you  
Unto HIM who sits above you,—

“In prayers, that upward mount  
Like to a fair-sunned fount  
Which, in gushing back upon you,  
Hath an upper music won you,—

“In faith, that still perceives  
No rose can shed her leaves,  
Far less, poet fall from mission,  
With an unfulfilled fruition,—

“In hope, that apprehends  
An end beyond these ends,  
And great uses rendered duly  
By the meanest song sung truly,—

“In thanks, for all the good  
By poets understood,  
For the sound of seraphs moving  
Down the hidden depths of loving,—

“For sights of things away  
Through fissures of the clay,  
Promised things which *shall* be given  
And sung over, up in Heaven,—

“For life, so lovely-vain,  
For death, which breaks the chain,  
For this sense of present sweetness,  
And this yearning to completeness !”

## *THE POET AND THE BIRD.*

### A FABLE.

#### I.

SAID a people to a poet—"Go out from among us  
straightway !

While we are thinking earthly things, thou singest of  
divine :

There 's a little fair brown nightingale who, sitting in the  
gateway,

Makes fitter music to our ear than any song of  
thine !"

#### II.

The poet went out weeping ; the nightingale ceased  
chanting :

"Now, wherefore, O thou nightingale, is all thy sweet-  
ness done ?"

—“ I cannot sing my earthly things, the heavenly poet  
wanting,  
Whose highest harmony includes the lowest under  
sun.”

## III.

The poet went out weeping, and died abroad, bereft  
there ;  
The bird flew to his grave and died amid a thousand  
wails :  
And when I last came by the place, I swear the music  
left there  
Was only of the poet's song, and not the nightingale's.

## *THE CRY OF THE HUMAN.*

### I.

"THERE is no God" the foolish saith,  
 But none "There is no sorrow,"  
 And nature oft the cry of faith  
 In bitter need will borrow :  
 Eyes, which the preacher could not school,  
 By wayside graves are raisèd,  
 And lips say "God be pitiful,"  
 Who ne'er said "God be praised."  
Be pitiful, O God !

### II.

The tempest stretches from the steep  
 The shadow of its coming,  
 The beasts grow tame and near us creep,  
 As help were in the human ;  
 Yet, while the cloud-wheels roll and grind,  
 We spirits tremble under—

The hills have echoes, but we find  
No answer for the thunder.

Be pitiful, O God !

III.

The battle hurtles on the plains,  
Earth feels new scythes upon her ;  
We reap our brothers for the wains,  
And call the harvest—honour :  
Draw face to face, front line to line,  
One image all inherit,—  
Then kill, curse on, by that same sign,  
Clay—clay, and spirit—spirit.

Be pitiful, O God !

IV.

The plague runs festering through the town,  
And never a bell is tolling,  
And corpses, jostled 'neath the moon,  
Nod to the dead-cart's rolling :  
The young child calleth for the cup,  
The strong man brings it weeping,  
The mother from her babe looks up,  
And shrieks away its sleeping.

Be pitiful, O God !

## V.

The plague of gold strikes far and near,  
And deep and strong it enters ;  
This purple chimar which we wear  
Makes madder than the centaur's :  
Our thoughts grow blank, our words grow strange,  
We cheer the pale gold-diggers,  
Each soul is worth so much on 'Change,  
And marked, like sheep, with figures.  
Be pitiful, O God !

## VI.

The curse of gold upon the land  
The lack of bread enforces ;  
The rail-cars snort from strand to strand,  
Like more of Death's White Horses :  
The rich preach "rights " and "future days,"  
And hear no angel scoffing,  
The poor die mute, with starving gaze  
On corn-ships in the offing.  
Be pitiful, O God !

## VII.

We meet together at the feast,  
To private mirth betake us ;



We stare down in the winecup, lest  
Some vacant chair should shake us :  
We name delight, and pledge it round—  
“It shall be ours to-morrow !”  
God’s seraphs, do your voices sound  
As sad, in naming sorrow?  
Be pitiful, O God !

## VIII.

We sit together, with the skies,  
The steadfast skies, above us,  
We look into each other’s eyes,  
“And how long will you love us ?”  
The eyes grow dim with prophecy,  
The voices, low and breathless,—  
“Till death us part !”—O words, to be  
Our *best*, for love the deathless !  
Be pitiful, O God !

## IX.

We tremble by the harmless bed  
Of one loved and departed :  
Our tears drop on the lips that said  
Last night “Be stronger-hearted !”  
O God—to clasp those fingers close,  
And yet to feel so lonely !

To see a light upon such brows,  
Which is the daylight only !  
Be pitiful, O God !

## X.

The happy children come to us  
And look up in our faces ;  
They ask us " Was it thus, and thus,  
When we were in their places ?"  
We cannot speak ;—we see anew  
The hills we used to live in,  
And feel our mother's smile press through  
The kisses she is giving.  
Be pitiful, O God !

## XI.

We pray together at the kirk  
For mercy, mercy solely :  
Hands weary with the evil work,  
We lift them to the Holy.  
The corpse is calm below our knee,  
Its spirit, bright before Thee :  
Between them, worse than either, we—  
Without the rest or glory.  
Be pitiful, O God !

## XII.

We leave the communing of men,  
The murmur of the passions,  
And live alone, to live again  
With endless generations :  
Are we so brave? The sea and sky  
In silence lift their mirrors,  
And, glassed therein, our spirits high  
Recoil from their own terrors.  
Be pitiful, O God !

## XIII.

We sit on hills our childhood wist,  
Woods, hamlets, streams, beholding :  
The sun strikes through the farthest mist  
The city's spire to golden :  
The city's golden spire it was,  
When hope and health were strongest,  
But now it is the churchyard grass  
We look upon the longest.  
Be pitiful, O God !

## XIV.

And soon all vision waxeth dull ;  
Men whisper " He is dying ; "

We cry no more "Be pitiful!"

We have no strength for crying:  
No strength, no need. Then, soul of mine,  
Look up and triumph rather!  
Lo, in the depth of God's Divine,  
The Son adjures the Father

BE PITIFUL, O GOD!

*A PORTRAIT.*

One name is Elizabeth.—BEN JONSON.

I WILL paint her as I see her.

Ten times have the lilies blown  
Since she looked upon the sun.

And her face is lily-clear,  
Lily-shaped, and dropped in duty  
To the law of its own beauty.

Oval cheeks encoloured faintly,  
Which a trail of golden hair  
Keeps from fading off to air :

And a forehead fair and saintly,  
Which two blue eyes undershine,  
Like meek prayers before a shrine.

Face and figure of a child,—  
Though too calm, you think, and tender,  
For the childhood you would lend her.

Yet child-simple, undefiled,  
Frank, obedient, waiting still  
On the turnings of your will.

Moving light, as all young things,  
As young birds, or early wheat  
When the wind blows over it.

Only, free from flutterings  
Of loud mirth that scorneth measure—  
Taking love for her chief pleasure.

Choosing pleasures, for the rest,  
Which come softly—just as she,  
When she nestles at your knee.

Quiet talk she liketh best,  
In a bower of gentle looks,—  
Watering flowers, or reading books.

And her voice, it murmurs lowly,  
As a silver stream may run,  
Which yet feels (you feel) the sun.

And her smile it seems half holy,  
As if drawn from thoughts more far  
Than our common jestings are.

And if any poet knew her,  
He would sing of her with falls  
Used in lovely madrigals.

And if any painter drew her,  
He would paint her unaware  
With a halo round the hair.

And if reader read the poem,  
He would whisper "You have done a  
Consecrated little Una."

And a dreamer (did you show him  
That same picture) would exclaim,  
" 'T is my angel, with a name ! "

And a stranger, when he sees her  
In the street even, smileth stilly,  
Just as you would at a lily.

And all voices that address her,  
Softens, sleeken every word,  
As if speaking to a bird.

And all fancies yearn to cover  
The hard earth, whereon she passes,  
With the thymy-scented grasses.

And all hearts do pray "God love her!"  
Ay and always, in good sooth,  
We may all be sure HE DOTH.



## *CONFESSIONS.*

### I.

FACE to face in my chamber, my silent chamber, I saw  
her:

God and she and I only, there I sat down to draw her  
Soul through the clefts of confession: "Speak, I am  
holding thee fast,

As the angel of resurrection shall do it at the last!"

"My cup is blood-red

With my sin," she said,

"And I pour it out to the bitter lees,

As if the angels of judgment stood over me strong at the  
last,

Or as thou wert as these."

### II.

When God smote his hands together, and struck out thy  
soul as a spark

Into the organized glory of things, from deeps of the  
dark,—

Say, didst thou shine, didst thou burn, didst thou honour  
the power in the form,

As the star does at night, or the fire-fly, or even the little  
ground-worm ?

“I have sinned,” she said,

“For my seed-light shed

Has smouldered away from His first decrees.

The cypress praiseth the fire-fly, the ground-leaf praiseth  
the worm ;

I am viler than these.”

III.

When God on that sin had pity, and did not trample thee  
straight

With His wild rains beating and drenching thy light  
found inadequate ;

When He only sent thee the north-wind, a little search-  
ing and chill,

To quicken thy flame—didst thou kindle and flash to the  
heights of His will ?

“I have sinned,” she said,

“Unquickened, unspread,

My fire dropt down, and I wept on my knees :

I only said of His winds of the north as I shrank from  
their chill,

What delight is in these ? ”

## IV.

When God on that sin had pity, and did not meet it as  
such,

But tempered the wind to thy uses, and softened the world  
to thy touch,

At least thou wast moved in thy soul, though unable to  
prove it afar,

Thou couldst carry thy light like a jewel, not giving it out  
like a star ?

“ I have sinned,” she said,

“ And not merited

The gift He gives, by the grace He sees !

The mine-cave praiseth the jewel, the hill-side praiseth  
the star ;

I am viler than these.”

## V.

Then I cried aloud in my passion,—Unthankful and  
impotent creature,

To throw up thy scorn unto God through the rents in thy  
beggarly nature !

If He, the all-giving and loving, is served so unduly,  
what then

Hast thou done to the weak and the false and the  
changing,—thy fellows of men ?

“I have *loved*,” she said,  
 (Words bowing her head  
 As the wind the wet acacia-trees)  
 “I saw God sitting above me, but I . . I sat among men,  
 And I have loved these.”

VI.

Again with a lifted voice, like a choral trumpet that takes  
 The lowest note of a viol that trembles, and triumphing  
 breaks  
 On the air with it solemn and clear,—“Behold ! I have  
 sinned not in this !  
 Where I loved, I have loved much and well,—I have  
 verily loved not amiss.  
 Let the living,” she said,  
 “Inquire of the dead,  
 In the house of the pale-fronted images :  
 My own true dead will answer for me, that I have not  
 loved amiss  
 In my love for all these.

VII.

“The least touch of their hands in the morning, I keep  
 it by day and by night ;  
 Their least step on the stair, at the door, still throbs  
 through me, if ever so light ;

Their least gift, which they left to my childhood, far off  
in the long-ago years,  
Is now turned from a toy to a relic, and seen through the  
crystals of tears.

Dig the snow," she said,  
"For my churchyard bed,  
Yet I, as I sleep, shall not fear to freeze,  
If one only of these my beloveds shall love me with  
heart-warm tears,  
As I have loved these !

## VIII.

"If I angered any among them, from thenceforth my own  
life was sore ;  
If I fell by chance from their presence, I clung to their  
memory more :  
Their tender I often felt holy, their bitter I sometimes  
called sweet ;  
And whenever their heart has refused me, I fell down  
straight at their feet.  
I have loved," she said,—  
"Man is weak, God is dread,  
Yet the weak man dies with his spirit at ease,  
Having poured such an unguent of love but once on the  
Saviour's feet  
As I lavished for these."

IX.

Go, I cried, thou hast chosen the Human, and left the  
Divine!

Then, at least, have the Human shared with thee their  
wild-berry wine?

Have they loved back thy love, and when strangers  
approached thee with blame,

Have they covered thy fault with their kisses, and loved  
thee the same?

But she shrunk and said

“God, over my head,

Must sweep in the wrath of his judgment-seas,  
If *He* shall deal with me sinning, but only indeed the  
same

And no gentler than these.”

*LOVED ONCE.*

## I.

I CLASSED, appraising once,  
 Earth's lamentable sounds,—the welladay,  
     The jarring yea and nay,  
 The fall of kisses on unanswering clay,  
 The sobbed farewell, the welcome mournfuller,—  
     But all did leaven the air  
 With a less bitter leaven of sure despair  
     Than these words—"I loved ONCE."

## II.

And who saith "I loved ONCE"?  
 Not angels,—whose clear eyes, love, love foresee,  
     Love, through eternity,  
 And by To Love do apprehend To Be.  
 Not God, called LOVE, His noble crown-name casting  
     A light too broad for blasting:  
 The great God, changing not from everlasting,  
     Saith never "I loved ONCE."

## III.

Oh, never is "Loved ONCE"  
Thy word, thou Victim-Christ, misprizèd friend !  
Thy cross and curse may rend,  
But having loved Thou lovest to the end.  
This is man's saying—man's : too weak to move  
One spherèd star above,  
Man desecrates the eternal God-word Love  
By his No More, and Once.

## IV.

How say ye "We loved once,"  
Blasphemers ? Is your earth not cold enow,  
Mourners, without that snow ?  
Ah friends, and would ye wrong each other so ?  
And could ye say of some whose love is known,  
Whose prayers have met your own,  
Whose tears have fallen for you, whose smiles have shone  
So long,—“ We loved them ONCE ” ?

## V.

Could ye "We loved her once"  
Say calm of me, sweet friends, when out of sight ?  
When hearts of better right  
Stand in between me and your happy light ?



Or when, as flowers kept too long in the shade,  
    Ye find my colours fade,  
And all that is not love in me decayed ?  
    Such words—Ye loved me ONCE !

## VI.

    Could ye “We loved her once”  
Say cold of me when further put away  
    In earth’s sepulchral clay,  
When mute the lips which deprecate to-day ?  
Not so ! not then—least then ! When life is shriven  
    And death’s full joy is given,—  
Of those who sit and love you up in heaven  
    Say not “We loved them once.”

## VII.

    Say never ye loved ONCE :  
God is too near above, the grave beneath,  
    And all our moments breathe  
Too quick in mysteries of life and death,  
For such a word. The eternities avenge  
    Affections light of range.  
There comes no change to justify that change,  
    Whatever comes—Loved ONCE !

## VIII.

And yet that same word ONCE  
Is humanly acceptive. Kings have said,  
Shaking a discrowned head,  
“We ruled once,”—dotards, “We once taught and  
led,”  
Cripples once danced i’ the vines, and bards approved,  
Were once by scornings moved :  
But love strikes one hour—LOVE ! Those *never* loved  
Who dream that they loved ONCE.

## THE HOUSE OF CLOUDS.

### I.

I WOULD build a cloudy House  
 For my thoughts to live in,  
 When for earth too fancy-loose,  
 And too low for heaven :  
 Hush ! I talk my dream aloud,  
 I build it bright to see,—  
 I build it on the moonlit cloud  
 To which I looked with *thee*.

### II.

Cloud-walls of the morning's grey,  
 Faced with amber column,  
 Crowned with crimson cupola  
 From a sunset solemn :  
 May-mists, for the casements, fetch,  
 Pale and glimmering,  
 With a sunbeam hid in each  
 And a smell of spring.

## III.

Build the entrance high and proud,  
Darkening and then brightening,  
Of a riven thunder-cloud,  
Veinèd by the lightning :  
Use one with an iris-stain  
For the door so thin,  
Turning to a sound like rain  
As I enter in.

## IV.

Build a spacious hall thereby  
Boldly, never fearing ;  
Use the blue place of the sky  
Which the wind is clearing :  
Branched with corridors sublime,  
Flecked with winding stairs,  
Such as children wish to climb  
Following their own prayers.

## V.

In the mutest of the house  
I will have my chamber ;  
Silence at the door shall use  
Evening's light of amber,

Solemnizing every mood,  
Softening in degree,  
Turning sadness into good  
As I turn the key.

## VI.

Be my chamber tapestried  
With the showers of summer,  
Close, but soundless, glorified  
When the sunbeams come here—  
Wandering harpers, harping on  
Waters stringed for such,  
Drawing colour, for a tune,  
With a vibrant touch.

## VII.

Bring a shadow green and still  
From the chesnut-forest,  
Bring a purple from the hill,  
When the heat is sorest ;  
Spread them out from wall to wall,  
Carpet-wove around,  
Whereupon the foot shall fall  
In light instead of sound.

## VIII.

Bring fantastic cloudlets home  
From the noontide zenith,  
Ranged for sculptures round the room,  
Named as Fancy weeneth ;  
Some be Junos, without eyes,  
Naiads, without sources,  
Some be birds of paradise,  
Some, Olympian horses.

## IX.

Bring the dews the birds shake off  
Waking in the hedges,—  
Those too perfumed, for a proof,  
From the lilies' edges :  
From our England's field and moor,  
Bring them calm and white in,  
Whence to form a mirror pure  
For Love's self-delighting.

## X.

Bring a grey cloud from the east  
Where the lark is singing,  
(Something of the song at least  
Unlost in the bringing) :

That shall be a morning-chair,  
Poet-dream may sit in  
When it leans out on the air,  
Unrhymed and unwritten.

## XI.

Bring the red cloud from the sun,  
While he sinketh catch it ;  
That shall be a couch,—with one  
Sidelong star to watch it,—  
Fit for poet's finest thought  
At the curfew-sounding ;  
Things unseen being nearer brought  
Than the seen, around him.

## XII.

Poet's thought,—not poet's sigh.  
'Las, they come together !  
Cloudy walls divide and fly  
As in April weather.  
Cupola and column proud,  
Structure bright to see,  
Gone ! except that moonlit cloud  
To which I looked with *thee*.

## XIII.

Let them ! Wipe such visionings  
From the fancy's cartel :  
Love secures some fairer things,  
Dowered with his immortal.  
The sun may darken, heaven be bowed,  
But still unchanged shall be.—  
Here, in my soul,—that moonlit cloud  
To which I looked with THEE !



*A SABBATH MORNING AT SEA.*

## I.

THE ship went on with solemn face ;  
To meet the darkness on the deep,  
The solemn ship went onward :  
I bowed down weary in the place,  
For parting tears and present sleep  
Had weighed mine eyelids downward.

## II.

Thick sleep which shut all dreams from me,  
And kept my inner self apart  
And quiet from emotion,  
Then brake away and left me free,  
Made conscious of a human heart  
Betwixt the heaven and ocean.

## III.

The new sight, the new wondrous sight !  
The waters round me, turbulent,  
The skies impassive o'er me,  
Calm in a moonless, sunless light,  
Half glorified by that intent  
Of holding the day-glory !

## IV.

Two pale thin clouds did stand upon  
The meeting line of sea and sky,  
With aspect still and mystic :  
I think they did foresee the sun,  
And rested on their prophecy  
In quietude majestic,

## V.

Then flushed to radiance where they stood,  
Like statues by the open tomb  
Of shining saints half risen.  
The sun !—he came up to be viewed,  
And sky and sea made mighty room  
To inaugurate the vision.

## VI.

I oft had seen the dawnlight run  
As red wine through the hills, and break  
Through many a mist's inurning ;  
But, here, no earth profaned the sun :  
Heaven, ocean, did alone partake  
The sacrament of morning.

## VII.

Away with thoughts fantastical !  
I would be humble to my worth,  
Self-guarded as self-doubted :  
Though here no earthly shadows fall,  
I, joying, grieving without earth,  
May desecrate without it.

## VIII.

God's sabbath morning sweeps the waves ;  
I would not praise the pageant high  
Yet miss the dedicature :  
I, carried toward the sunless graves  
By force of natural things,—should I  
Exult in only Nature?

## IX.

And could I bear to sit alone  
    'Mid Nature's fixed benignities,  
        While my warm pulse was moving?  
Too dark thou art, O glittering sun,  
    Too strait ye are, capacious seas,  
        To satisfy the loving !

## X.

It seems a better lot than so,  
    To sit with friends beneath the beech,  
        And feel them dear and dearer ;  
Or follow children as they go  
    In pretty pairs, with softened speech,  
        As the church-bells ring nearer.

## XI.

Love me, sweet friends, this sabbath day !  
    The sea sings round me while ye roll  
        Afar the hymn unaltered,  
And kneel, where once I knelt to pray,  
    And bless me deeper in the soul,  
        Because the voice has faltered.

## XII.

And though this sabbath comes to me  
Without the stolèd minister  
Or chanting congregation,  
God's Spirit brings communion, He  
Who brooded soft on waters drear,  
Creator on creation.

## XIII.

Himself, I think, shall draw me higher  
Where keep the saints with harp and song  
An endless sabbath morning,  
And on that sea commixed with fire  
Oft drop their eyelids, raised too long  
To the full Godhead's burning.

*A FLOWER IN A LETTER.*

## I.

My lonely chamber next the sea  
Is full of many flowers set free  
By summer's earliest duty :  
Dear friends upon the garden-walk  
Might stop amid their fondest talk  
To pull the least in beauty.

## II.

A thousand flowers, each seeming one  
That learnt by gazing on the sun  
To counterfeit his shining ;  
Within whose leaves the holy dew  
That falls from heaven has won anew  
A glory, in declining.

## III.

Red roses, used to praises long,  
Contented with the poet's song,  
    The nightingale's being over ;  
And lilies white, prepared to touch  
The whitest thought, nor soil it much,  
    Of dreamer turned to lover.

## IV.

Deep violets, you liken to  
The kindest eyes that look on you,  
    Without a thought disloyal ;  
And cactuses a queen might don  
If weary of a golden crown,  
    And still appear as royal.

## V.

Pansies for ladies all,—I wis  
That none who wear such brooches miss  
    A jewel in the mirror ;  
And tulips, children love to stretch  
Their fingers down, to feel in each  
    Its beauty's secret nearer.

## VI.

Love's language may be talked with these ;  
To work out choicest sentences,  
    No blossoms can be meeter ;  
And, such being used in Eastern bowers,  
Young maids may wonder if the flowers  
    Or meanings be the sweeter.

## VII.

And such being strewn before a bride,  
Her little foot may turn aside,  
    Their longer bloom decreeing,  
Unless some voice's whispered sound  
Should make her gaze upon the ground  
    Too earnestly for seeing.

## VIII.

And such being scattered on a grave,  
Whoever mourneth there may have  
    A type which seemeth worthy  
Of that fair body hid below,  
Which bloomed on earth a time ago,  
    Then perished as the earthy.



## IX.

And such being wreathed for worldly feast,  
Across the brimming cup some guest  
    Their rainbow colours viewing  
May feel them, with a silent start,  
The covenant, his childish heart  
    With nature made, renewing.

## X.

No flowers our gardened England hath  
To match with these, in bloom and breath,  
    Which from the world are hiding  
In sunny Devon moist with rills,—  
A nunnery of cloistered hills,  
    The elements presiding.

## XI.

By Loddon's stream the flowers are fair  
That meet one gifted lady's care  
    With prodigal rewarding :  
(For Beauty is too used to run  
To Mitford's bower—to want the sun  
    To light her through the garden).

## XII.

But here, all summers are comprised,  
The nightly frosts shrink exorcised  
    Before the priestly moonshine ;  
And every wind with stolèd feet  
In wandering down the alleys sweet  
    Steps lightly on the sunshine.

## XIII.

And (having promised Harpocrate  
Among the nodding roses that  
    No harm shall touch his daughters)  
Gives quite away the rushing sound  
He dares not use upon such ground  
    To ever-trickling waters.

## XIV.

Yet, sun and wind ! what can ye do  
But make the leaves more brightly show  
    In posies newly gathered ?  
I look away from all your best  
To one poor flower unlike the rest,  
    A little flower half-withered.

## XV.

I do not think it ever was  
A pretty flower,—to make the grass  
Look greener where it reddened ;  
And now it seems ashamed to be  
Alone, in all this company,  
Of aspect shrunk and saddened.

## XVI.

A chamber-window was the spot  
It grew in, from a garden-pot,  
Among the city shadows :  
If any, tending it, might seem  
To smile, 't was only in a dream  
Of nature in the meadows.

## XVII.

How coldly on its head did fall  
The sunshine, from the city wall  
In pale refraction driven !  
How sadly plashed upon its leaves  
The raindrops, losing in the eaves  
The first sweet news of heaven !

## XVIII.

And those who planted, gathered it  
In gamesome or in loving fit,  
And sent it as a token  
Of what their city pleasures be,—  
For one, in Devon by the sea  
And garden blooms, to look on.

## XIX.

But SHE for whom the jest was meant,  
With a grave passion innocent  
Receiving what was given,—  
Oh, if her face she turnèd then,  
Let none say 't was to gaze again  
Upon the flowers of Devon !

## XX.

Because, whatever virtue dwells  
In genial skies, warm oracles  
For gardens brightly springing,—  
The flower which grew beneath your eyes,  
Belovèd friends, to mine supplies  
A beauty worthier singing !

*THE MASK.*

## I.

I HAVE a smiling face, she said,  
 I have a jest for all I meet,  
 I have a garland for my head  
 And all its flowers are sweet,—  
 And so you call me gay, she said.

## II.

Grief taught to me this smile, she said,  
 And Wrong did teach this jesting bold;  
 These flowers were plucked from garden-bed  
 While a death-chime was tolled:  
 And what now will you say?—she said.

## III.

Behind no prison-grate, she said,  
 Which slurs the sunshine half a mile.

Live captives so uncomforted  
As souls behind a smile.  
God's pity let us pray, she said.

## IV.

I know my face is bright, she said,—  
Such brightness dying suns diffuse :  
I bear upon my forehead shed  
The sign of what I lose,  
The ending of my day, she said.

## V.

If I dared leave this smile, she said,  
And take a moan upon my mouth,  
And tie a cypress round my head,  
And let my tears run smooth,  
It were the happier way, she said.

## VI.

And since that must not be, she said,  
I fain your bitter world would leave.  
How calmly, calmly smile the Dead,  
Who do not, therefore, grieve !  
The yea of Heaven is yea, she said.

## VII.

But in your bitter world, she said,  
Face-joy's a costly mask to wear ;  
'T is bought with pangs long nourishèd,  
And rounded to despair :  
Grief's earnest makes life's play, she said.

## VIII.

Ye weep for those who weep? she said—  
Ah fools ! I bid you pass them by.  
Go, weep for those whose hearts have bled  
What time their eyes were dry.  
Whom sadder can I say? she said.

*CALLS ON THE HEART.*

## I.

FREE Heart, that singest to-day  
 Like a bird on the first green spray,  
 Wilt thou go forth to the world  
 Where the hawk hath his wing unfurled  
     To follow, perhaps, thy way?  
 Where the tamer thine own will bind,  
 And, to make thee sing, will blind,  
 While the little hip grows for the free behind?  
     Heart, wilt thou go?  
         —“No, no!  
     Free hearts are better so.”

## II.

The world, thou hast heard it told,  
 Has counted its robber-gold,  
 And the pieces stick to the hand;  
 The world goes riding it fair and grand,  
     While the truth is bought and sold;



*WISDOM UNAPPLIED.*

## I.

IF I were thou, O butterfly,  
And poised my purple wing to spy  
The sweetest flowers that live and die,

## II.

I would not waste my strength on those,  
As thou,—for summer has a close,  
And pansies bloom not in the snows.

## III.

If I were thou, O working bee,  
And all that honey-gold I see  
Could delve from roses easily,

## IV.

I would not hive it at man's door,  
As thou,—that heirdom of my store  
Should make him rich and leave me poor.

## V.

If I were thou, O eagle proud,  
And screamed the thunder back aloud,  
And faced the lightning from the cloud,

## VI.

I would not build my eyrie-throne,  
As thou,—upon a crumbling stone  
Which the next storm may trample down.

## VII.

If I were thou, O gallant steed,  
With pawing hoof and dancing head,  
And eye outrunning thine own speed,

## VIII.

I would not meeken to the rein,  
As thou,—nor smooth my nostril plain  
From the glad desert's snort and strain.

## IX.

If I were thou, red-breasted bird,  
With song at shut-up window heard,  
Like Love's sweet Yes too long deferred,

## X.

I would not overstay delight,  
As thou,—but take a swallow-flight  
Till the new spring returned to sight.

## XI.

While yet I spake, a touch was laid  
Upon my brow, whose pride did fade  
As thus, methought, an angel said,—

## XII.

“If I were *thou* who sing'st this song,  
Most wise for others, and most strong  
In seeing right while doing wrong,

## XIII.

“I would not waste my cares, and choose,  
As *thou*,—to seek what thou must lose,  
Such gains as perish in the use.

## XIV.

“I would not work where none can win,  
As *thou*,—halfway 'twixt grief and sin,  
But look above and judge within.

## XV.

“I would not let my pulse beat high,  
As *thou*,—towards fame’s regality,  
Nor yet in love’s great jeopardy.

## XVI.

“I would not champ the hard cold bit,  
As *thou*,—of what the world thinks fit,  
But take God’s freedom, using it.

## XVII.

“I would not play earth’s winter out,  
As *thou*,—but gird my soul about,  
And live for life past death and doubt.

## XVIII.

“Then sing, O singer!—but allow,  
Beast, fly and bird, called foolish now,  
Are wise (for all thy scorn) as *thou*.”

## *MEMORY AND HOPE.*

### I.

BACK-LOOKING Memory

And prophet Hope both sprang from out the ground;  
One, where the flashing of cherubic sword

Fell sad in Eden's ward,

And one, from Eden earth within the sound  
Of the four rivers lapsing pleasantly,

What time the promise after curse was said,

"Thy seed shall bruise his head."

### II.

Poor Memory's brain is wild,

As moonstruck by that flaming atmosphere

When she was born ; her deep eyes shine and shone

With light that conquereth sun

And stars to wanner paleness year by year :

With odorous gums she mixeth things defiled,

She trampleth down earth's grasses green and sweet

With her far-wandering feet.

## III.

She plucketh many flowers,  
Their beauty on her bosom's coldness killing ;  
She teacheth every melancholy sound  
To winds and waters round ;  
She droppeth tears with seed where man is tilling  
The rugged soil in his exhausted hours ;  
She smileth—ah me ! in her smile doth go  
A mood of deeper woe.

## IV.

Hope tripped on out of sight,  
Crowned with an Eden wreath she saw not wither,  
And went a-nodding through the wilderness  
With brow that shone no less  
Than a sea-gull's wing, brought nearer by rough weather,  
Searching the treeless rock for fruits of light ;  
Her fair quick feet being armed from stones and cold  
By slippers of pure gold.

## V.

Memory did Hope much wrong  
And, while she dreamed, her slippers stole away ;  
But still she wended on with mirth unheeding,  
Although her feet were bleeding,

Till Memory tracked her on a certain day,  
And with most evil eyes did search her long  
And cruelly, whereat she sank to ground  
    In a stark deadly swoond.

## VI.

And so my Hope were slain,  
Had it not been that THOU wast standing near—  
Oh Thou who saidest "Live," to creatures lying  
    In their own blood and dying!  
For Thou her forehead to Thine heart didst rear  
And make its silent pulses sing again,  
Pouring a new light o'er her darkened eyne  
    With tender tears from Thine.

## VII.

Therefore my Hope arose  
From out her swoond and gazed upon Thy face,  
And, meeting there that soft subduing look  
    Which Peter's spirit shook,  
Sank downward in a rapture to embrace  
Thy piercèd hands and feet with kisses close,  
And prayed Thee to assist her evermore  
    To "reach the things before."

## VIII.

Then gavest Thou the smile  
Whence angel-wings thrill quick like summer lightning,  
Vouchsafing rest beside Thee, where she never  
From Love and Faith may sever :—  
Whereat the Eden crown, she saw not whitening  
A time ago, though whitening all the while,  
Reddened with life to hear the Voice which talked  
To Adam as he walked.



*HUMAN LIFE'S MYSTERY.*

## I.

WE sow the glebe, we reap the corn,  
We build the house where we may rest,  
And then, at moments, suddenly  
We look up to the great wide sky,  
Inquiring wherefore we were born,  
For earnest or for jest?

## II.

The senses folding thick and dark  
About the stifled soul within,  
We guess diviner things beyond,  
And yearn to them with yearning fond ;  
We strike out blindly to a mark  
Believed in, but not seen.

## III.

We vibrate to the pant and thrill  
    Wherewith Eternity has curled  
In serpent-twine about God's seat :  
While, freshening upward to His feet,  
In gradual growth His full-leaved will  
    Expands from world to world.

## IV.

And, in the tumult and excess  
    Of act and passion under sun,  
We sometimes hear—oh, soft and far,  
As silver star did touch with star,  
The kiss of Peace and Righteousness  
    Through all things that are done.

## V.

God keeps His holy mysteries  
    Just on the outside of man's dream ;  
In diapason slow, we think  
To hear their pinions rise and sink,  
While they float pure beneath His eyes,  
    Like swans adown a stream.

## VI.

Abstractions, are they, from the forms  
Of His great beauty?—exaltations  
From His great glory?—strong previsions  
Of what we shall be?—intuitions  
Of what we are—in calms and storms  
Beyond our peace and passions?

## VII.

Things nameless! which, in passing so,  
Do stroke us with a subtle grace;  
We say, "Who passes?"—they are dumb;  
We cannot see them go or come,  
Their touches fall soft, cold, as snow  
Upon a blind man's face.

## VIII.

Yet, touching so, they draw above  
Our common thoughts to Heaven's unknown;  
Our daily joy and pain advance  
To a divine significance  
Our human love—O mortal love,  
That light is not its own!

## IX.

And sometimes horror chills our blood  
To be so near such mystic Things,  
And we wrap round us for defence  
Our purple manners, moods of sense—  
As angels from the face of God  
Stand hidden in their wings.

## X.

And sometimes through life's heavy swoond  
We grope for them, with strangled breath  
We stretch our hands abroad and try  
To reach them in our agony;  
And widen, so, the broad life-wound  
Soon large enough for death.

*A CHILD'S THOUGHT OF GOD.*

## I.

THEY say that God lives very high ;  
But if you look above the pines  
You cannot see our God ; and why ?

## II.

And if you dig down in the mines  
You never see Him in the gold ;  
Though from Him all that 's glory shines.

## III.

God is so good, He wears a fold  
Of heaven and earth across His face—  
Like secrets kept, for love, untold.

## IV.

But still I feel that His embrace

Slides down by thrills, through all things made,  
Through sight and sound of every place :

## V.

As if my tender mother laid

On my shut lips her kisses' pressure,  
Half-waking me at night, and said

"Who kissed you through the dark, dear guesser?"

## *THE CLAIM.*

### I.

GRIEF sate upon a rock and sighed one day,  
 (Sighing is all her rest,)  
 “Wellaway, wellaway, ah wellaway !”  
 As ocean beat the stone, did she her breast,  
 “Ah wellaway ! ah me ! alas, ah me !”  
 Such sighing uttered she.

### II.

A Cloud spake out of heaven, as soft as rain  
 That falls on water,—“Lo,  
 The winds have wandered from me ! I remain  
 Alone in the sky-waste, and cannot go  
 To lean my whiteness on the mountain blue  
 Till wanted for more dew.

## III.

“The sun has struck my brain to weary peace,  
Whereby constrained and pale  
I spin for him a larger golden fleece  
Than Jason’s, yearning for as full a sail.  
Sweet Grief, when thou hast sighèd to thy mind,  
Give me a sigh for wind,

## IV.

“And let it carry me adown the west !”  
But Love, who pròstrated  
Lay at Grief’s foot, his lifted eyes possessed  
Of her full image, answered in her stead ;  
“Now nay, now nay ! she shall not give away  
What is my wealth, for any Cloud that flieth :  
Where Grief makes moan,  
Love claims his own,  
And therefore do I lie here night and day,  
And eke my life out with the breath she sigheth.”



## SONG OF THE ROSE.

ATTRIBUTED TO SAPPHO.

(From *Achilles Tatius*.)

IF Zeus chose us a King of the flowers in his mirth,  
 He would call to the Rose and would royally crown it ;  
 For the Rose, ho, the Rose ! is the grace of the earth,  
 Is the light of the plants that are growing upon it :  
 For the Rose, ho, the Rose ! is the eye of the flowers,  
 Is the blush of the meadows that feel themselves fair,  
 Is the lightning of beauty that strikes through the bowers  
 On pale lovers who sit in the glow unaware.  
 Ho, the Rose breathes of love ! ho, the Rose lifts the cup  
 To the red lips of Cypris invoked for a guest !  
 Ho, the Rose, having curled its sweet leaves for the world,  
 Takes delight in the motion its petals keep up,  
 As they laugh to the wind as it laughs from the west !

*A DEAD ROSE.*

## I.

O ROSE, who dares to name thee?  
 No longer roseate now, nor soft nor sweet,  
 But pale and hard and dry as stubble wheat,—  
 Kept seven years in a drawer, thy titles shame thee.

## II.

The breeze that used to blow thee  
 Between the hedgerow thorns, and take away  
 An odour up the lane to last all day,—  
 If breathing now, unsweetened would forgo thee.

## III.

The sun that used to smite thee,  
 And mix his glory in thy gorgeous urn  
 Till beam appeared to bloom, and flower to burn,—  
 If shining now, with not a hue would light thee.

## IV.

The dew that used to wet thee,  
And, white first, grow incarnadined because  
It lay upon thee where the crimson was,—  
If dropping now, would darken where it met thee.

## V.

The fly that 'lit upon thee  
To stretch the tendrils of its tiny feet  
Along thy leaf's pure edges after heat,—  
If 'lighting now, would coldly overrun thee.

## VI.

The bee that once did suck thee,  
And build thy perfumed ambers up his hive,  
And swoon in thee for joy, till scarce alive,—  
If passing now, would blindly overlook thee.

## VII.

The heart doth recognize thee,  
Alone, alone! the heart doth smell thee sweet,  
Doth view thee fair, doth judge thee most complete,  
Perceiving all those changes that disguise thee.

## VIII.

Yes, and the heart doth owe thee  
More love, dead rose, than to any roses bold  
Which Julia wears at dances, smiling cold:—  
Lie still upon this heart which breaks below thee!

*THE EXILE'S RETURN.*

## I.

WHEN from thee, weeping I removed,  
And from my land for years,  
I thought not to return, Beloved,  
With those same parting tears.  
I come again to hill and lea,  
Weeping for thee.

## II.

I clasped thine hand when standing last  
Upon the shore in sight.  
The land is green, the ship is fast,  
I shall be there to-night.  
I shall be there—no longer *we*—  
No more with thee !

## III.

Had I beheld thee dead and still,  
I might more clearly know  
How heart of thine could turn as chill  
As hearts by nature so ;  
How change could touch the falsehood-free  
And changeless *thee*.

## IV.

But, now thy fervid looks last-seen  
Within my soul remain,  
'T is hard to think that *they* have been,  
To be no more again—  
That I shall vainly wait, ah me !  
A word from thee.

## V.

I could not bear to look upon  
That mound of funeral clay  
Where one sweet voice is silence—one  
Æthereal brow, decay ;  
Where all thy mortal I may see,  
But never thee.

## VI.

For thou art where all friends are gone  
Whose parting pain is o'er ;  
And I, who love and weep alone,  
Where thou wilt weep no more,  
Weep bitterly and selfishly  
For *me*, not *thee*.

## VII.

I know, Beloved, thou canst not know  
That I endure this pain ;  
For saints in heaven, the Scriptures show,  
Can never grieve again :  
And grief known mine, even there, would be  
Still shared by thee.

## *THE SLEEP.*

He giveth His beloved sleep.—*Psalm cxxvii. 2.*

### I.

OF all the thoughts of God that are  
 Borne inward into souls afar,  
 Along the Psalmist's music deep,  
 Now tell me if that any is,  
 For gift or grace, surpassing this :  
 "He giveth His belovèd—sleep" ?

### II.

What would we give to our beloved ?  
 The hero's heart to be unmoved,  
 The poet's star-tuned harp to sweep,  
 The patriot's voice to teach and rouse,  
 The monarch's crown to light the brows ?  
 He giveth His belovèd—sleep.



## III.

What do we give to our beloved ?  
A little faith all undisproved,  
A little dust to overweep,  
And bitter memories to make  
The whole earth blasted for our sake :  
He giveth His belovèd—sleep.

## IV.

“Sleep soft, beloved !” we sometimes say,  
Who have no tune to charm away  
Sad dreams that through the eyelids creep :  
But never doleful dream again  
Shall break the happy slumber when  
He giveth His belovèd—sleep.

## V.

O earth, so full of dreary noises !  
O men, with wailing in your voices !  
O delvèd gold, the wailers heap !  
O strife, O curse, that o’er it fall !  
God strikes a silence through you all,  
And giveth His belovèd—sleep.

## VI.

His dews drop mutely on the hill,  
His cloud above it saileth still,  
Though on its slope men sow and reap :  
More softly than the dew is shed,  
Or cloud is floated overhead,  
He giveth His belovèd—sleep.

## VII.

Ay, men may wonder while they scan  
A living, thinking, feeling man  
Confirmed in such a rest to keep ;  
But angels say, and through the word  
I think their happy smile is *heard*—  
“He giveth His belovèd—sleep.”

## VIII.

For me, my heart that erst did go  
Most like a tired child at a show,  
That sees through tears the mummers leap,  
Would now its wearied vision close,  
Would childlike on His love repose  
Who giveth His belovèd—sleep.

## IX.

And friends, dear friends, when it shall be  
That this low breath is gone from me,  
And round my bier ye come to weep,  
Let One, most loving of you all,  
Say "Not a tear must o'er her fall !  
"He giveth His belovèd sleep."

## THE MEASURE.

He comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure (שֶׁלִישׁ).  
*Isaiah xl.*

Thou givest them tears to drink in a measure (שֶׁלִישׁ).<sup>\*</sup>  
*Psalms lxxx.*

### I.

God the Creator, with a pulseless hand  
 Of unoriginated power, hath weighed  
 'The dust of earth and tears of man in one  
     Measure, and by one weight:  
     So saith His holy book.

### II.

Shall we, then, who have issued from the dust  
 And there return,—shall we, who toil for dust,  
 And wrap our winnings in this dusty life,  
     Say “No more tears, Lord God!  
     The measure runneth o’er”?

<sup>\*</sup> I believe that the word occurs in no other part of the Hebrew Scriptures.

## III.

Oh, Holder of the balance, laughest Thou ?  
Nay, Lord ! be gentler to our foolishness,  
For His sake who assumed our dust and turns  
    On Thee pathetic eyes  
    Still moistened with our tears.

## IV.

And teach us, O our Father, while we weep,  
To look in patience upon earth and learn—  
Waiting, in that meek gesture, till at last  
    These tearful eyes be filled  
    With the dry dust of death.

*COWPER'S GRAVE.*

## I.

It is a place where poets crowned may feel the heart's  
decaying ;

It is a place where happy saints may weep amid their  
praying ;

Yet let the grief and humbleness as low as silence lan-  
guish :

Earth surely now may give her calm to whom she gave  
her anguish.

## II.

O poets, from a maniac's tongue was poured the death-  
less singing !

O Christians, at your cross of hope a hopeless hand was  
clinging !

O men, this man in brotherhood your weary paths be-  
guiling,

Groaned inly while he taught you peace, and died while  
ye were smiling !

## III.

And now, what time ye all may read through dimming  
tears his story,  
How discord on the music fell and darkness on the  
glory,  
And how when, one by one, sweet sounds and wander-  
ing lights departed,  
He wore no less a loving face because so broken-  
hearted.

## IV.

He shall be strong to sanctify the poet's high vocation,  
And bow the meekest Christian down in meeker adora-  
tion ;  
Nor ever shall he be, in praise, by wise or good for-  
saken,  
Named softly as the household name of one whom God  
hath taken.

## V.

With quiet sadness and no gloom I learn to think upon  
him,  
With meekness that is gratefulness to God whose heaven  
hath won him,

Who suffered once the madness-cloud to His own love  
to blind him,  
But gently led the blind along where breath and bird  
could find him ;

## VI.

And wrought within his shattered brain such quick poetic  
senses  
As hills have language for, and stars, harmonious in-  
fluences :  
The pulse of dew upon the grass kept his within its  
number,  
And silent shadows from the trees refreshed him like a  
slumber.

## VII.

Wild timid hares were drawn from woods to share his  
home-caresses,  
Uplooking to his human eyes with sylvan tendernesses :  
The very world, by God's constraint, from falsehood's  
ways removing,  
Its women and its men became, beside him, true and  
loving.



## VIII.

And though, in blindness, he remained unconscious of  
that guiding,  
And things provided came without the sweet sense of  
providing,  
He testified this solemn truth, while phrenzy desolated,  
—Nor man nor nature satisfies whom only God created.

## IX.

Like a sick child that knoweth not his mother while she  
blesses  
And drops upon his burning brow the coolness of her  
kisses,—  
That turns his fevered eyes around—"My mother!  
where 's my mother?"—  
As if such tender words and deeds could come from any  
other!—

## X.

The fever gone, with leaps of heart he sees her bending  
o'er him,  
Her face all pale from watchful love, the unwearied love  
she bore him!

Thus woke the poet from the dream his life's long fever  
gave him,  
Beneath those deep pathetic Eyes which closed in death  
to save him.

## XI.

Thus? oh, not *thus!* no type of earth can image that  
awaking,  
Wherein he scarcely heard the chant of seraphs, round  
him breaking,  
Or felt the new immortal throb of soul from body  
parted,  
But felt those eyes alone, and knew—"My Saviour! *not*  
deserted!"

## XII.

Deserted! Who hath dreamt that when the cross in  
darkness rested,  
Upon the Victim's hidden face no love was manifested?  
What frantic hands outstretched have e'er the atoning  
drops averted?  
What tears have washed them from the soul, that *one*  
should be deserted?

## XIII.

Deserted! God could separate from His own essence  
rather;  
And Adam's sins *have* swept between the righteous Son  
and Father:  
Yea, once, Immanuel's orphaned cry His universe hath  
shaken—  
It went up single, echoless, "My God, I am forsaken!"

## XIV.

It went up from the Holy's lips amid His lost creation,  
That, of the lost, no son should use those words of  
desolation!  
That earth's worst phrenzies, marring hope, should mar  
not hope's fruition,  
And I, on Cowper's grave, should see his rapture in a  
vision.

## *THE WEAKEST THING.*

### I.

WHICH is the weakest thing of all  
     Mine heart can ponder?  
 The sun, a little cloud can pall  
     With darkness yonder?  
 The cloud, a little wind can move  
     Where'er it listeth?  
 The wind, a little leaf above,  
     Though sere, resisteth?

### II.

What time that yellow leaf was green,  
     My days were gladder;  
 But now, whatever Spring may mean,  
     I must grow sadder.  
 Ah me! a *leaf* with sighs can wring  
     My lips asunder?  
 Then is mine heart the weakest thing  
     Itself can ponder.

## III.

Yet, Heart, when sun and cloud are pined  
And drop together,  
And at a blast which is not wind  
The forests wither,  
Thou, from the darkening deathly curse  
To glory breakest,—  
The Strongest of the universe  
Guarding the weakest !

## *THE PET-NAME.*

. . . . . the name

Which from THEIR lips seemed a caress.

Miss MITFORD'S *Dramatic Scenes.*

### I.

I HAVE a name, a little name,  
 Uncadenced for the ear,  
 Unhonoured by ancestral claim,  
 Unsanctified by prayer and psalm  
 The solemn font anear.

### II.

It never did to pages wove  
 For gay romance belong ;  
 It never dedicate did move  
 As "Sacharissa" unto love,  
 "Orinda" unto song.

### III.

Though I write books, it will be read  
 Upon the leaves of none,

And afterward, when I am dead,  
Will ne'er be graved for sight or tread,  
Across my funeral-stone.

## IV.

This name, whoever chance to call,  
Perhaps your smile may win :  
Nay, do not smile ! mine eyelids fall  
Over mine eyes and feel withal  
The sudden tears within.

## V.

Is there a leaf, that greenly grows  
Where summer meadows bloom,  
But gathereth the winter snows  
And changeth to the hue of those,  
If lasting till they come ?

## VI.

Is there a word, or jest, or game,  
But time incrusteth round  
With sad associate thoughts the same ?  
And so to me my very name  
Assumes a mournful sound.

## VII.

My brother gave that name to me  
When we were children twain,  
When names acquired baptismally  
Were hard to utter, as to see  
That life had any pain.

## VIII.

No shade was on us then, save one  
Of chesnuts from the hill ;  
And through the word our laugh did run  
As part thereof : the mirth being done,  
He calls me by it still.

## IX.

Nay, do not smile ! I hear in it  
What none of you can hear,—  
The talk upon the willow seat,  
The bird and wind that did repeat  
Around, our human cheer.

## X.

I hear the birthday's noisy bliss,  
My sisters' woodland glee,



My father's praise I did not miss,  
When stooping down he cared to kiss  
The poet at his knee,—

## XI.

And voices which, to name me, aye  
Their tenderest tones were keeping—  
To some I never more can say  
An answer till God wipes away  
In heaven these drops of weeping.

## XII.

My name to me a sadness wears :  
No murmurs cross my mind—  
Now God be thanked for these thick tears  
Which show, of those departed years,  
Sweet memories left behind.

## XIII.

Now God be thanked for years enwrought  
With love which softens yet :  
Now God be thanked for every thought  
Which is so tender it has caught  
Earth's guerdon of regret.

XIV.

Earth saddens, never shall remove

Affections purely given ;

And e'en that mortal grief shall prove

The immortality of love,

And heighten it with Heaven.

*THE MOURNING MOTHER.*

(OF THE DEAD BLIND )

## I.

Dost thou weep, mourning mother,  
 For thy blind boy in grave?  
 That no more with each other  
 Sweet counsel ye can have?  
 That he, left dark by nature,  
 Can never more be led  
 By thee, maternal creature,  
 Along smooth paths instead?  
 That thou canst no more show him  
 The sunshine, by the heat;  
 The river's silver flowing,  
 By murmurs at his feet?  
 The foliage, by its coolness;  
 The roses, by their smell;  
 And all creation's fulness,  
 By Love's invisible?  
 ,

Weepest thou to behold not  
His meek blind eyes again,—  
Closed doorways which were folded,  
And prayed against in vain—  
And under which, sat smiling  
The child-mouth evermore,  
As one who watcheth, wiling  
The time by, at a door?  
And weepest thou to feel not  
His clinging hand on thine—  
Which now, at dream-time, will not  
Its cold touch disentwine?  
And weepest thou still oft,  
Oh, never more to mark  
His low soft words, made softer  
By speaking in the dark?  
Weep on, thou mourning mother!

## II.

But since to him when living,  
Thou wast both sun and moon,  
Look o'er his grave, surviving,  
From a high sphere alone:  
Sustain that exaltation,  
Expand that tender light,

And hold in mother-passion  
Thy Blessèd in thy sight.  
See how he went out straightway  
From the dark world he knew,—  
No twilight in the gateway  
To mediate 'twixt the two,—  
¶ Into the sudden glory,  
Out of the dark he trod,  
Departing from before thee  
At once to light and GOD !—  
For the first face, beholding  
The Christ's in its divine,  
For the first place, the golden  
And tideless hyaline,  
With trees at lasting summer  
That rock to songful sound,  
While angels the new-comer  
Wrap a still smile around.  
Oh, in the blessed psalm now,  
His happy voice he tries,  
Spreading a thicker palm-bough,  
Than others, o'er his eyes !  
Yet still, in all the singing,  
Thinks haply of thy song  
Which, in his life's first springing,  
Sang to him all night long ;

And wishes it beside him,  
    With kissing lips that cool  
And soft did overglide him,  
    To make the sweetness full.  
Look up, O mourning mother !  
    Thy blind boy walks in light :  
Ye wait for one another  
    Before God's infinite.  
But thou art now the darkest,  
    Thou mother left below—  
Thou, the sole blind,—thou markest,  
    Content that it be so,—  
Until ye two have meeting  
    Where Heaven's pearl-gate is,  
And *he* shall lead thy feet in,  
    As once thou leddest *his*.  
Wait on, thou mourning mother !

## *A VALEDICTION.*

### I.

GOD be with thee, my belovèd,—GOD be with thee !  
     Else alone thou goest forth,  
     Thy face unto the north,  
 Moor and pleasance all around thee and beneath thee  
     Looking equal in one snow ;  
     While I, who try to reach thee,  
     Vainly follow, vainly follow  
     With the farewell and the hollo,  
     And cannot reach thee so.  
     Alas, I can but teach thee !  
 GOD be with thee, my belovèd,—GOD be with thee !

### II.

Can I teach thee, my belovèd,—can I teach thee ?  
     If I said, “ Go left or right,”  
     The counsel would be light,  
 The wisdom, poor of all that could enrich thee ;  
     My right would show like left ;

My raising would depress thee,  
My choice of light would blind thee,  
Of way—would leave behind thee,  
Of end—would leave bereft.  
Alas, I can but bless thee !

May GOD teach thee, my belovèd,—may GOD teach thee !

## III.

Can I bless thee, my belovèd,—can I bless thee ?  
What blessing word can I  
From mine own tears keep dry ?  
What flowers grow in my field wherewith to dress thee ?  
My good reverts to ill ;  
My calmnesses would move thee,  
My softnesses would prick thee,  
My bindings up would break thee,  
My crownings curse and kill.  
Alas, I can but love thee !

May GOD bless thee, my belovèd,—may GOD bless thee !

## IV.

Can I love thee, my belovèd,—can I love thee ?  
And is *this* like love, to stand  
With no help in my hand,  
When strong as death I fain would watch above thee ?



*A VALEDICTION*

My love-kiss can deny  
No tear that falls beneath it ;  
Mine oath of love can swear thee  
From no ill that comes near thee,  
And thou diest while I breathe it,  
And *I*—I can but die !

May God love thee, my' belovèd,—may God love thee !

*LESSONS FROM THE GORSE.*

To win the secret of a weed's plain heart.—LOWELL.

## I.

MOUNTAIN gorses, ever-golden,  
 Cankered not the whole year long !  
 Do ye teach us to be strong,  
 Howsoever pricked and holden  
 Like your thorny blooms, and so  
 Trodden on by rain and snow,  
 Up the hill-side of this life, as bleak as where ye grow ?

## II.

Mountain blossoms, shining blossoms,  
 Do ye teach us to be glad  
 When no summer can be had,  
 Blooming in our inward bosoms ?  
 Ye, whom God preserveth still,  
 Set as lights upon a hill,  
 Tokens to the wintry earth that Beauty liveth still !

## III.

Mountain gorses, do ye teach us  
From that academic chair  
Canopied with azure air,  
That the wisest word man reaches  
Is the humblest he can speak?  
Ye, who live on mountain peak,  
Yet live low along the ground, beside the grasses meek !

## IV.

Mountain gorses, since Linnæus  
Knelt beside you on the sod,  
For your beauty thanking God,—  
For your teaching, ye should see us  
Bowing in prostration new !  
Whence arisen,—if one or two  
Drops be on our cheeks—O world, they are not tears but  
dew.

*THE LADY'S "YES."*

I.

"YES," I answered you last night;  
 "No," this morning, sir, I say:  
 Colours seen by candle-light  
 Will not look the same by day

II.

When the viols played their best,  
 Lamps above and laughs below,  
*Love me* sounded like a jest,  
 Fit for *yes* or fit for *no*.

III.

Call me false or call me free,  
 Vow, whatever light may shine,—  
 No man on your face shall see  
 Any grief for change on mine.

## IV.

Yet the sin is on us both ;  
Time to dance is not to woo ;  
Wooing light makes fickle troth,  
Scorn of *me* recoils on *you*.

## V.

Learn to win a lady's faith  
Nobly, as the thing is high,  
Bravely, as for life and death,  
With a loyal gravity.

## VI.

Lead her from the festive boards,  
Point her to the starry skies ;  
Guard her, by your truthful words,  
Pure from courtship's flatteries.

## VII.

By your truth she shall be true,  
Ever true, as wives of yore ;  
And her *yes*, once said to you,  
SHALL be Yes for evermore.

## *A WOMAN'S SHORTCOMINGS.*

### I.

SHE has laughed as softly as if she sighed,  
 She has counted six, and over,  
 Of a purse well filled and a heart well tried—  
 Oh, each a worthy lover !  
 They “give her time ;” for her soul must slip  
 Where the world has set the grooving ;  
 She will lie to none with her fair red lip :  
 But love seeks truer loving.

### II.

She trembles her fan in a sweetness dumb,  
 As her thoughts were beyond recalling,  
 With a glance for *one*, and a glance for *some*—  
 From her eyelids rising and falling ;  
 Speaks common words with a blushful air,  
 Hears bold words, unreprieving ;  
 But her silence says—what she never will swear—  
 And love seeks better loving.

## III.

Go, lady, lean to the night-guitar  
And drop a smile to the bringer ;  
Then smile as sweetly, when he is far,  
At the voice of an in-door singer.  
Bask tenderly beneath tender eyes ;  
Glance lightly, on their removing ;  
And join new vows to old perjuries—  
But dare not call it loving.

## IV.

Unless you can think, when the song is done,  
No other is soft in the rhythm ;  
Unless you can feel, when left by One,  
That all men else go with him ;  
Unless you can know, when unpraised by his breath,  
That your beauty itself wants proving ;  
Unless you can swear "For life, for death!"—  
Oh, fear to call it loving !

## V.

Unless you can muse in a crowd all day  
On the absent face that fixed you ;  
Unless you can love, as the angels may,  
With the breadth of heaven betwixt you ;

Unless you can dream that his faith is fast,  
Through behoving and unbehoving ;  
Unless you can *die* when the dream is past—  
Oh, never call it loving !



*A MAN'S REQUIREMENTS.*

## I.

Love me, Sweet, with all thou art,  
Feeling, thinking, seeing ;  
Love me in the lightest part,  
Love me in full being.

## II.

Love me with thine open youth  
In its frank surrender ;  
With the vowing of thy mouth,  
With its silence tender.

## III.

Love me with thine azure eyes,  
Made for earnest granting ;  
Taking colour from the skies,  
Can Heaven's truth be wanting ?

## IV.

Love me with their lids, that fall  
Snow-like at first meeting ;  
Love me with thine heart, that all  
Neighbours then see beating.

## V.

Love me with thine hand stretched out  
Freely—open-minded :  
Love me with thy loitering foot,—  
Hearing one behind it.

## VI.

Love me with thy voice, that turns  
Sudden faint above me ;  
Love me with thy blush that burns  
When I murmur *Love me !*

## VII.

Love me with thy thinking soul,  
Break it to love-sighing ;  
Love me with thy thoughts that roll  
On through living—dying.

## VIII.

Love me in thy gorgeous airs,  
When the world has crowned thee ;  
Love me, kneeling at thy prayers,  
With the angels round thee.

## IX.

Love me pure, as musers do,  
Up the woodlands shady :  
Love me gaily, fast and true,  
As a winsome lady.

## X.

Through all hopes that keep us brave,  
Further off or nigher,  
Love me for the house and grave,  
And for something higher.

## XI.

Thus, if thou wilt prove me, Dear,  
Woman's love no fable,  
*I* will love *thee*—half a year—  
As a man is able.

*A YEAR'S SPINNING.*

## I.

He listened at the porch that day,  
 To hear the wheel go on, and on ;  
 And then it stopped, ran back away,  
 While through the door he brought the sun :  
 But now my spinning is all done.

## II.

He sat beside me, with an oath  
 That love ne'er ended, once begun ;  
 I smiled—believing for us both,  
 What was the truth for only one :  
 And now my spinning is all done.

## III.

My mother cursed me that I heard  
 A young man's wooing as I spun :

Thanks, cruel mother, for that word,—  
For I have, since, a harder known !  
And now my spinning is all done.

## IV.

I thought—O God !—my first-born's cry  
Both voices to mine ear would drown :  
I listened in mine agony—  
It was the *silence* made me groan !  
And now my spinning is all done.

• • •

## V.

Bury me 'twixt my mother's grave,  
(Who cursed me on her death-bed lone)  
And my dead baby's (God it save !)  
Who, not to bless me, would not moan.  
And now my spinning is all done.

## VI.

A stone upon my heart and head,  
But no name written on the stone !  
Sweet neighbours, whisper low instead,  
“ This sinner was a loving one—  
And now her spinning is all done.”

## VII.

And let the door ajar remain,  
In case he should pass by anon ;  
And leave the wheel out very plain,—  
That HE, when passing in the sun,  
May see the spinning is all done.

## CHANGE UPON CHANGE.

### I.

FIVE months ago the stream did flow,  
 The lilies bloomed within the sedge,  
 And we were lingering to and fro,  
 Where none will track thee in this snow,  
 Along the stream, beside the hedge.  
 Ah, Sweet, be free to love and go !  
 For if I do not hear thy foot,  
 The frozen river is as mute,  
 The flowers have dried down to the root :  
 And why, since these be changed since May,  
 Shouldst *thou* change less than *they* ?

### II.

And slow, slow as the winter snow  
 The tears have drifted to mine eyes,  
 And my poor cheeks, five months ago  
 Set blushing at thy praises so,  
 Put paleness on for a disguise.

Ah, Sweet, be free to praise and go !

For if my face is turned too pale,

It was thine oath that first did fail,—

It was thy love proved false and frail,—

And why, since these be changed enow,

Should *I* change less than *thou* ?



*THAT DAY.*

I.

I STAND by the river where both of us stood,  
And there is but one shadow to darken the flood ;  
And the path leading to it, where both used to pass,  
Has the step but of one, to take dew from the grass,—  
One forlorn since that day.

## II.

The flowers of the margin are many to see ;  
None stoops at my bidding to pluck them for me.  
The bird in the alder sings loudly and long,—  
My low sound of weeping disturbs not his song,  
As thy vow did, that day.

### III.

I stand by the river, I think of the vow ;  
Oh, calm as the place is, vow-breaker, be thou !

I leave the flower growing, the bird unproved ;  
 Would I trouble *thee* rather than *them*, my beloved,—  
 And my lover that day ?

IV.

Go, be sure of my love, by that treason forgiven ;  
 Of my prayers, by the blessings they win thee from  
 Heaven ;  
 Of my grief—(guess the length of the sword by the  
 sheath's)  
 By the silence of life, more pathetic than death's !  
 Go,—be clear of that day !

*A REED.*

## I.

I AM no trumpet, but a reed ;  
No flattering breath shall from me lead  
    A silver sound, a hollow sound :  
I will not ring, for priest or king,  
One blast that in re-echoing  
    Would leave a bondsman faster bound.

## II.

I am no trumpet, but a reed,—  
A broken reed, the wind indeed  
    Left flat upon a dismal shore ;  
Yet if a little maid or child  
Should sigh within it, earnest-mild  
    This reed will answer evermore.

## III.

I am no trumpet, but a reed ;  
Go, tell the fishers, as they spread  
    'Their nets along the river's edge,  
I will not tear their nets at all,  
Nor pierce their hands, if they should fall :  
    Then let them leave me in the sedge.

## *THE DEAD PAN.*

Excited by Schiller's "Gotter Griechenlands," and partly founded on a well-known tradition mentioned in a treatise of Plutarch ("De Oraculorum Defectu"), according to which, at the hour of the Saviour's agony, a cry of "Great Pan is dead!" swept across the waves in the hearing of certain mariners,—and the oracles ceased.

It is in all veneration to the memory of the deathless Schiller that I oppose a doctrine still more dishonouring to poetry than to Christianity.

As Mr. Kenyon's graceful and harmonious paraphrase of the German poem was the first occasion of the turning of my thoughts in this direction, I take advantage of the pretence to indulge my feelings (which overflow on other grounds) by inscribing my lyric to that dear friend and relative, with the earnestness of appreciating esteem as well as of affectionate gratitude. (1844.)

### I.

Gods of Hellas, gods of Hellas,  
 Can ye listen in your silence?  
 Can your mystic voices tell us  
 Where ye hide? In floating islands,  
 With a wind that evermore  
 Keeps you out of sight of shore?

Pan, Pan is dead.

## II.

In what revels are ye sunken  
In old Æthiopia?  
Have the Pygmies made you drunken,  
Bathing in mandragora  
Your divine pale lips that shiver  
Like the lotus in the river?

Pan, Pan is dead.

## III.

Do ye sit there still in slumber,  
In gigantic Alpine rows?  
The black poppies out of number  
Nodding, dripping from your brows  
To the red lees of your wine,  
And so kept alive and fine?

Pan, Pan is dead.

## IV.

Or lie crushed your stagnant corpses  
Where the silver spheres roll on,  
Stung to life by centric forces  
Thrown like rays out from the sun?—  
While the smoke of your old altars  
Is the shroud that round you welters?

Great Pan is dead.



## VIII.

Have ye left the mountain places,  
Oreads wild, for other tryst?  
Shall we see no sudden faces  
Strike a glory through the mist?  
Not a sound the silence thrills  
Of the everlasting hills :

Pan, Pan is dead.

## IX.

O twelve gods of Plato's vision,  
Crowned to starry wanderings,  
With your chariots in procession  
And your silver clash of wings !  
Very pale ye seem to rise,  
Ghosts of Grecian deities,

Now Pan is dead !

## X.

Jove, that right hand is unloaded  
Whence the thunder did prevail,  
While in idiocy of godhead  
Thou art staring the stars pale !  
And thine eagle, blind and old,  
Roughs his feathers in the cold.

Pan, Pan is dead.



## XI.

Where, O Juno, is the glory  
Of thy regal look and tread ?  
Will they lay, for evermore, thee  
On thy dim, strait, golden bed ?  
Will thy queendom all lie hid  
Meekly under either lid ?

Pan, Pan is dead.

## XII.

Ha, Apollo ! floats his golden  
Hair all mist-like where he stands,  
While the Muses hang enfolding  
Knee and foot with faint wild hands ?  
'Neath the clanging of thy bow,  
Niobe looked lost as thou !

Pan, Pan is dead.

## XIII.

Shall the casque with its brown iron  
Pallas' broad blue eyes eclipse,  
And no hero take inspiring  
From the god-Greek of her lips ?  
'Neath her olive dost thou sit,  
Mars the mighty, cursing it ?

Pan, Pan is dead.

## XIV.

Bacchus, Bacchus ! on the panther  
He swoons, bound with his own vines ;  
And his Mænads slowly saunter,  
Head aside, among the pines,  
While they murmur dreamingly  
“ Evohe !—ah—evohe !—  
Ah, Pan is dead !”

## XV.

Neptune lies beside the trident,  
Dull and senseless as a stone ;  
And old Pluto deaf and silent  
Is cast out into the sun :  
Ceres smileth stern thereat,  
“ We *all* now are desolate  
Now Pan is dead.”

## XVI.

Aphrodite ! dead and driven  
As thy native foam thou art ;  
With the cestus long done heaving  
On the white calm of thine heart !  
*Ai Adonis !* at that shriek  
Not a tear runs down her cheek—  
Pan, Pan is dead.

## XVII.

And the Loves, we used to know from  
One another, huddled lie,  
Frore as taken in a snow-storm,  
Close beside her tenderly ;  
As if each had weakly tried  
Once to kiss her as he died.

Pan, Pan is dead.

## XVIII.

What, and Hermes? Time enthralleth  
All thy cunning, Hermes, thus,  
And the ivy blindly crawleth  
Round thy brave caduceus?  
Hast thou no new message for us,  
Full of thunder and Jove-glories?

Nay, Pan is dead.

## XIX.

Crownèd Cybele's great turret  
Rocks and crumbles on her head ;  
Roar the lions of her chariot  
Toward the wilderness, unfed :  
Scornful children are not mute,—  
“Mother, mother, walk afoot,

Since Pan is dead !”

## XX.

In the fiery-hearted centre  
Of the solemn universe,  
Ancient Vesta,—who could enter  
To consume thee with this curse?  
Drop thy grey chin on thy knee,  
O thou palsied Mystery!

For Pan is dead.

## XXI.

Gods, we vainly do adjure you,—  
Ye return nor voice nor sign!  
Not a votary could secure you  
Even a grave for your Divine:  
Not a grave, to show thereby  
*Here these grey old gods do lie.*

Pan, Pan is dead.

## XXII.

Even that Greece who took your wages  
Calls the obolus outworn;  
And the hoarse, deep-throated ages  
Laugh your godships unto scorn:  
And the poets do disclaim you,  
Or grow colder if they name you—

And Pan is dead.

## XXIII.

Gods bereavèd, gods belated,  
With your purples rent asunder !  
Gods discrowned and desecrated,  
Disinherited of thunder !  
Now, the goats may climb and crop  
The soft grass on Ida's top—  
Now Pan is dead.

## XXI

Calm, of old, the bark went onward,  
When a cry more loud than wind  
Rose up, deepened, and swept sunward  
From the piled Dark behind ;  
And the sun shrank and grew pale,  
Breathed against by the great wail—  
“Pan, Pan is dead.”

## XXV.

And the rowers from the benches  
Fell, each shuddering on his face,  
While departing Influences  
Struck a cold back through the place ;  
And the shadow of the ship  
Reeled along the passive deep—  
“Pan, Pan is dead.”

## XXVI.

And that dismal cry rose slowly  
And sank slowly through the air,  
Full of spirit's melancholy  
And eternity's despair !  
And they heard the words it said—  
PAN IS DEAD—GREAT PAN IS DEAD—  
PAN, PAN IS DEAD.

## XXVII.

'T was the hour when One in Sion  
Hung for love's sake on a cross ;  
When His brow was chill with dying  
And His soul was faint with loss ;  
When His priestly blood dropped downward  
And His kingly eyes looked throneward--  
Then, Pan was dead.

## XXVIII.

By the love, He stood alone in,  
His sole Godhead rose complete,  
And the false gods fell down moaning  
Each from off his golden seat ;  
All the false gods with a cry  
Rendered up their dcity—  
Pan, Pan was dead.

## XXIX.

Wailing wide across the islands,  
They rent, vest-like, their Divine ;  
And a darkness and a silence  
Quenched the light of every shrine ;  
And Dodona's oak swang lonely  
Henceforth, to the tempest only :  
Pan, Pan was dead.

## XXX.

Pythia staggered, feeling o'er her  
Her lost god's forsaking look ;  
Straight her eyeballs filmed with horror  
And her crispy fillets shook  
And her lips gasped, through their foam,  
For a word that did not come.  
Pan, Pan was dead.

## XXXI.

O ye vain false gods of Hellas,  
Ye are silent evermore !  
And I dash down this old chalice  
Whence libations ran of yore.  
See, the wine crawls in the dust  
Wormlike—as your glories must,  
Since Pan is dead.

## XXXII.

Get to dust, as common mortals,  
By a common doom and track !  
Let no Schiller from the portals  
Of that Hades call you back,  
Or instruct us to weep all  
At your antique funeral.

Pan, Pan is dead.

## XXXIII.

By your beauty, which confesses  
Some chief Beauty conquering you,—  
By our grand heroic guesses  
Through your falsehood at the True,—  
We will weep *not!* earth shall roll  
Heir to each god's aureole—

And Pan is dead.

## XXXIV.

Earth outgrows the mythic fancies  
Sung beside her in her youth,  
And those debonair romances  
Sound but dull beside the truth.  
Phœbus' chariot-course is run :  
Look up, poets, to the sun !

Pan, Pan is dead.



## XXXV.

Christ hath sent us down the angels ;  
And the whole earth and the skies  
Are illumed by altar-candles  
Lit for blessèd mysteries ;  
And a Priest's hand through creation  
Waveth calm and consecration :  
And Pan is dead.

## XXXVI.

Truth is fair : should we forgo it ?  
Can we sigh right for a wrong ?  
God himself is the best Poet,  
And the Real is His song.  
Sing His truth out fair and full,  
And secure His beautiful !  
Let Pan be dead !

## XXXVII.

Truth is large : our aspiration  
Scarce embraces half we be.  
Shame, to stand in His creation  
And doubt truth's sufficiency !—  
To think God's song unexcelling  
The poor tales of our own telling—  
When Pan is dead !

## XXXVIII.

What is true and just and honest,  
 What is lovely, what is pure,  
 All of praise that hath admonisht,  
 All of virtue,—shall endure ;  
 These are themes for poets' uses,  
 Stirring nobler than the Muses,  
Ere Pan was dead.

## XXXIX.

O brave poets, keep back nothing,  
 Nor mix falsehood with the whole !  
 Look up Godward ; speak the truth in  
 Worthy song from earnest soul :  
 Hold, in high poetic duty,  
 Truest Truth the fairest Beauty !  
Pan, Pan is dead.

END OF THE THIRD VOLUME.



SPOTTISWOODE AND CO., NEW-STREET SQUARE  
 LONDON